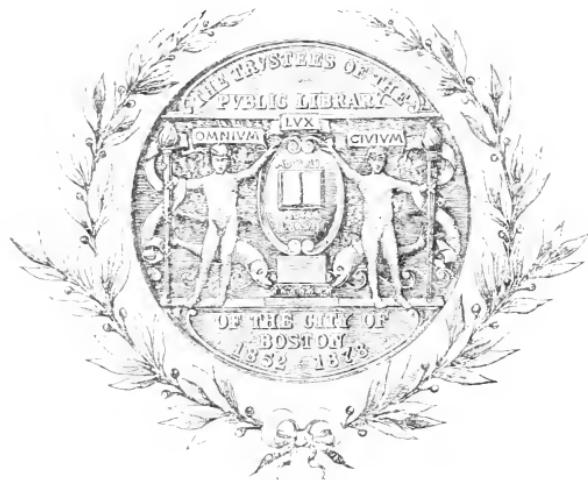


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A Loyal Lass

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"It's odd," she said, "and I like it!"

A LOYAL LASS

*A Story of the Niagara Campaign
of 1814*

BY

AMY E. BLANCHARD

ILLUSTRATED BY

FRANK T. MERRILL



W. A. WILDE COMPANY

BOSTON AND CHICAGO

1920

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A LOYAL LASS.

Nov 19 1912

To

DOROTHEA HARRISON ALLEN

IN MEMORY OF OUR HAPPY DAYS

AT NIAGARA

This Volume is Lovingly Dedicated

A. E. B.

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A LOYAL LASS

CHAPTER I

War Clouds

IT was getting dark in the woods which ran along above the deep gorge through which whirled and rushed the waters of the Niagara River, and Marianne Reyburn unconsciously hurried her steps; for, though a frontier lass and fearless to a degree, she was alive to the dangers which lay hidden in the forest, and at this particular time she felt a new apprehension, for there were mutterings of a war with England, and that meant—what, she hardly knew. It might include other dangers beside the Indian horrors of which her grandmother was always ready to tell her. Those tales of the early settlements, of the days of Frontenac, of the Seven Years' War, and of the "Hungry Year," were what had fed her childhood's fancy, and even now she listened to them with wide-open eyes and parted lips. Canadian was this grandmother, and it was Marianne's father who had come up out of the south with his

parents. Marianne liked to hear him tell how they left their Kentucky home in an emigrant wagon to settle in Ohio, and how a few years later her father, a young man of adventurous turn, had followed along the great lakes till he found him a wife on the borders of Ontario, and had finally made him a home near the little village of Lewiston.

Fair of skin, blue-eyed, light-haired, Marianne was like her father, though he was long-limbed and muscular; from her French mother she had taken her petite figure and her quick, animated movements. She was half French, but as she ran along through the woods her heart beat more loyally for her father's country than for that land of her grandmother, on the other side of the river. Her moccasined feet made little noise as she followed the pathway before her. The sun was low in the west, and was setting blood-red, so that it flecked with a ruddy light the trunks of the trees. "It is getting late; I must hurry," murmured the girl. Suddenly she paused and her hand sought her belt. She stood very still and listened, then with stealthy tread she moved forward and with a catlike spring swung herself up amid the branches of a large tree near by. Stretching her slim body along a heavy limb, she lay quite motionless, hidden by the leaves, her ears alert for the slightest sound.

Presently down the pathway came two men talking

earnestly. Marianne was very quiet after the first start of surprise and the whispered word "Victor!" which accompanied it. One of the men wore the rough dress of a habitant; the other, in homespun, bore a pack on his back, and Marianne decided him to be a Yankee pedler. He was talking with the garrulity of one accustomed to an audience. As the two approached nearer, Marianne caught the words: "I sez, sez I: That's neither here nor there. If we hev a war, it's every man's dooty to fight for his country whether he's sartin she'd ought to hev fit or no. Fur my part, I say she hadn't oughter fight, but then I dunno as I'm capable of jedgin'—mebbe she'd ought. At any rate, ef she sez: Son, I want you should fight, I'll fight. I guess mebbe I kin. I'm kinder curious about it; but there! I'm the curiouset fellow you ever did see,—always pryin' into what's no consarn of mine."

The young Canadian eyed him, a little puzzled, then seeing some reply was expected of him, he said, "For me, no, I fight not."

"You don't say? Wal, I dunno as you want to, but then I dunno as you won't hev to, come to thet. Ef the weepons of war are handy and your hairth and home are invaded, I dunno, bein' a man, as you won't up and fire a shot at somebody. Seems to me 'most any man would. But there! I dunno, mebbe you'd stand and take it all."

"I? Not I!" cried Victor. "I defend, yes, I defend, but I do not thrust myself, as it were, into the front of the fighting."

"Mebbe you'll hev to. Seems to me you're going to git the thick of it up here, if all I hear's correct. I'm sellin' out my pewter mugs and plates with jest that idee. Sez I, They'll come in handy, come time you want bullets; and it's an indoocement to buy. I've got a few left right here; you wouldn't care to take the hull lot cheap, would you? I'm willin' to let 'em go rather than lug 'em cross country." And the man from Connecticut swung his load from his shoulders preparatory to opening it.

The young Canadian laughed. "I do not buy, not I. Not of the pewter mug, but if you have—"

"A ribbon, or a few yards of calico?" returned the other, briskly. "Wal, I hev, though you don't look like one that needs either one to commend you," he added slyly. "But gals is gals, and it don't do no harm to propitiate 'em."

Before the open pack the two squatted, while Marianne, filled with inward mirth, watched them. First a roll of bright calico was displayed, next a gay kerchief, then a string of beads, some yards of coarse lace, and a bolt of ribbon. "Now, there you are," said the pedler; "that's as good a stock as you'd find to Buffalo or anywhere else about. Goods is

goin' to be fearful high on account of the war, and I dunno as I sh'll ever be able to sell so cheap ag'in,—allowin' that I do come 'round ag'in, which ain't likely." He waited to see the effect of his words while Victor eyed the array doubtfully. "Dunno which she'd like?" continued the pedler. "I'll bet she'd like that ribbon. She'll take to that, I'll be bound."

"Oh, but I don't." There was a rustle in the leaves overhead, a quick movement of something sliding down the trunk of the tree, and Marianne stood before the astonished pair, who started to their feet at sight of her. "I don't care for that," the girl went on. "I would much rather have the neckerchief. You meant me, didn't you, Victor? You wouldn't buy anything for any other girl, except Victorine or me, would you?" She clasped her hands around his arm and looked confidingly up into his face.

"Wal, I vum!" said the pedler. "Where did you drop from?"

"That tree," replied Marianne, with a toss of her head toward the spreading branches. She laughed as she saw that the look of astonishment had not left the face of the younger man. "I surprised you, didn't I, Victor? Did you think me a wildcat when I sprang into your midst?"

He looked down at her admiringly. "No, not that, Marianne. You could be but a kitten at best."

"And you meant to buy a ribbon for the kitten's collar? Well, I am not sure that I want it. Show me what you have there," she said imperiously to the pedler.

The man winked at Victor and held up the neckerchief.

"Is that the very prettiest thing you have in your pack?" the girl asked. "I want something else; something that nobody else has; something rare and unusual. I am tired of seeing myself wearing what every girl in Lewiston can have. I know you have sold dozens like this. Confess, haven't you?" She smiled archly at the man, who grinned in response, nothing abashed.

"You're a peart little crittur," he said admiringly, "and I dunno as I haven't sold quite a few of them. But now, see here, I've got something that I ain't ever shown to a woman soul, not sence I got it, and that wa'n't but jest yis'day; got it from an Injun squaw. Bless you, she had her heart set on a few yards of bright calico, and I ain't one to deny my goods to women folks s'long as they've anything to swop. Now, I call this pretty and sightly." He drew from his pocket a quaint bracelet of curiously carved stones linked together ingeniously. "I don't guess either of you ever saw a thing just like that. I dunno's them stuns is perticklerly precious, but it's a

sightly piece of work, and some folks east might give me a pretty penny fur it. But there! I dunno's I ain't willing to part with it right here."

Victor shot a quick look at Marianne, who was examining the bracelet with much interest. "It's odd," she said, "and I like it. I want it, Victor." She slipped it over her wrist and held out her slender young arm, her head to one side, and a critical expression upon her face. "Yes, I like it," she repeated. "It isn't a bit bright, or shiny, or anything like that; in fact, it's rather dull-looking, and it's made of only common little stones, but it's nothing like other people wear. I like things that way. I don't want what any one can have. I like the first strawberries because they are scarce, and I like the last wild flowers because no one can get any more. I don't suppose any one could get another bracelet just like this."

Victor nodded to the pedler. "What will you take for it?"

"Wal," returned the man, considering, "seein's you give me my supper and come this fur out of your way to show me the path, I won't be hard on you. I guess about five shillin's won't be overcharging. Calico's going to be skeerce, and I guess I could hev done better to hold on to what I hed, but there! I couldn't disa'pint that old Injun woman. I al'ays am weak consarnin' weemen,— hed a mother myself,—

and, though I ain't overfond of the redskins as a rule, I hed to humor that old soul and let her have that piece of calico."

"How big a piece was it?" Marianne asked sharply.

"Wal, I dunno as I kin tell you how much just to an inch, but 'twas a sizable piece," he replied evasively.

Marianne looked doubtful. "Who was the woman? Where does she live?"

"Oh, suz! I can't tell ye jest who she is. Them old squaws all look alike. But I'm telling ye the gospel truth, as sure as my name is Asa Peaslee. I'll tell ye what I'll do: call it five shillin's, and I'll throw in the ribbon; it's a yard good measure and true Scotch plaid."

Victor's hand sought his pocket, for Marianne made no comment, and in a moment he had transferred the amount to the pedler, and Marianne had her bracelet.

"Wal," said Asa, cheerfully, "I'll go on my way rejoicin'. I guess I'll reach the old fort by night, and I'll hunt ye up if I come along this way ag'in. I may be shoulderin' an unwieldy musket, but all the same I'd like to see how that bracelet's wearin'. Moreover, wherever my eyes gits a chance to be sot on a purty gal, I 'low 'em the chance." He slung his pack over his shoulder and trudged up the path, leaving Marianne and Victor standing together.

"And now I will kiss you for my present, Victor," said Marianne, and, suiting the action to the word, she lightly touched her lips to each of his cheeks, standing on tiptoe to do so, although Victor himself was below medium height. "Now come," she said, "we must hurry, for it is growing late. Tell me, is it true that we shall have war? I don't understand much about it, but my father will fight for the States, of course; and you, Victor?"

"I shall not fight; for I do not love England, and I am French, I am Canadian. I am loyal enough to my government, but I have no quarrel anywhere."

"I am glad of that. I wonder what grandmother will say, and—I hope it will not be, for it is all very silly. You will not go back to-night, Victor?"

"No, I thought I could perhaps row you over in the morning. Your grandmother wished it so."

"Then I will go. I wish to show her and Victorine the bracelet. The ribbon—I do not know just what I shall do about the ribbon. You were very good to get these things for me. Did I scare you when I dropped down so suddenly? I had hidden myself there when I heard you coming, for this talk of war made me feel less secure, and I did not know who might be prowling around the woods. I was so glad it was you."

"Marianne!"

"Yes."

"Nothing; yet if I were to go to the war, you would be sorry?"

"Of course. What a foolish question! I shall be sorry if my father goes. He declares he will, and mamma shuts her ears—so, and shakes her head when he speaks of it. Yet, I shall side with him. I always do, poor mamma says; but I tell her that she sides always with my brother, and so why should I not? I am a Reyburn, though my mother is a Desvouges. I am like my father, am I not, Victor? Say I am."

"You have his blue eyes and brown hair and are like him in feature, but you are little, like your mother, and have many of her ways of moving your hands and head."

"I wish I were tall, like my father. Why did Royal have all the height of the family? He could easily spare me an inch or two and not miss it, and he is not like my father in anything else. Still, I should be glad of my blue eyes."

"And you do not like dark eyes, Marianne?"

"Not for myself. I don't mind them in other people," she replied cheerfully.

"I am glad of that, else I should stand a poor chance of being admired."

Marianne laughed. "As if you wanted me to admire you, stupid old Victor. Why this is, I cannot tell, but when one has been used to seeing a person

all her life, she cannot tell how he looks. Now, you see, I cannot remember the time when I did not know you, and if, let me see—if Rose Maury should come and say to me: Do you think Victor handsome? I should say, How can I tell? I know he is a dear, good fellow, as a son to my grandmother, as a brother to my mother, as an uncle—not uncle either—as a—an elder brother to me; and as for his looks, I never think of them." She looked mischievously at him, nodding her head. "But I know what Rose would say."

Victor did not reply, but switched the leaves away from beneath their feet.

"You feel so, too, no doubt," Marianne went on. "If Rose or—or Leon or some of the boys were to ask you if you thought me pretty, you could not tell?" She looked at him inquiringly.

Victor laughed. "Fishing for a compliment, Marianne? I will not tell you."

"Oh, you will not hurt my feelings, I assure you."

"No, I suppose not."

"But you do feel just that way?"

"Not just that way. I think I could express an opinion."

"Oh, and—you will not tell me?"

"Marianne,"—he turned and stood in front of her, taking her two hands in his, and swinging them together lightly,—"you know as well as you can know

anything that I have told you a hundred times that I think you are adorably pretty. You know it."

"I do not. I didn't know but that you'd changed your mind; you haven't told me so for a long, long time, and one changes. My grandmother told me only last week that I had changed, and that a girl at sixteen is often quite different from a woman grown. Sometimes, she said, a really pretty girl grows up to be a hideous old woman, so — "

"You are so nearly an old woman that you thought you might be in danger of becoming hideous?" Victor asked mockingly.

"No; but how do I know that I do not change?"

"You do not look quite as you did when you were a little girl."

"I am more — "

"Yes, more — "

"What you said just now? What was it?"

"No, Marianne, I will not repeat it. Once a day is enough. Your grandmother long ago bade me not to feed you on sweets. See, we are out of the woods now, and the lights begin to twinkle from the houses. We are quite late."

"And I am very hungry; are not you?"

"Very."

"I forgot to ask. Did you come out to find me?"

"Not altogether. I came to show the pedler the

way to the fort. He will sleep there to-night, and go on to Buffalo to-morrow."

By this time they had emerged from the woods, and the roaring of the cataract came less distinctly to their ears, though the river rushed toward the lake with tremendous swiftness as it broadened out after its maddening whirl. Where the cliffs ended, the village of Lewiston appeared on the American side, while opposite, the heights of Queenston frowned. Marianne stood still for a moment, looking from the steep cliff to the roofs below her. Here were grouped the warehouses which held the goods brought by the lake boats, and stored there awaiting shipment, east or west. Here, too, were comfortable dwellings of the villagers, becoming more and more scattered as the town stretched off into the fertile country.

"About this war, Victor," said the girl, after a long pause, "will it come here?"

"It is reported so, yet who knows? One cannot tell. Think of it no more, Marianne, but enjoy the present. It will be a fine day to-morrow, I think, and we shall enjoy our trip across the river."

"Perhaps. Who can tell that, either? One may have a headache or be triste. It is not well to count on the future," she added demurely.

Victor laughed. "Since when did Marianne Reyburn consider the future?"

"Since a moment ago," she returned, laughing in her turn, and beginning to descend the steep path toward the village, a little beyond which stood her father's farmstead. A light twinkled from one of the windows before they had reached the house, and Marianne gave a sigh of satisfaction. "That means that supper is ready, but," she added, "it also means that I shall get a scolding for being so late. To be sure, they do not need help in matters of cookery, yet my mother will say I neglect my duties. Help me out, Victor, with some startling tale of adventure to spare me much blame."

As they stepped into the big kitchen, savory odors arose from a huge kettle hanging over the fire, for Mrs. Reyburn followed the fashion of her own people and served soup at least twice a day, even in summer.

"Ah me, but that smells good!" exclaimed Marianne.

"And well it may," returned her mother, sharply, "since you have not had a hand in it. Gadabout, where have you been? Not a sign of you since mid-day."

"Victor and I met a pedler," returned Marianne, evading the question. "See, mamma, what a curious bracelet Victor got for me. Is it not odd and fantastic? Oh, yes, and what was it the pedler said

about the war, Victor? That it was sure to come; and will father go? and Royal?"

Her mother paused, ladle in hand. "War! Alas, there is much talk of it, and it will divide families and lay waste the land. You surely are not thinking of going soldiering, Victor?"

"Not unless I needs must."

"Good!" returned Mrs. Reyburn, approvingly. "That is what I say. Go, call your father, Marianne."

Glad of escaping her scolding, Marianne ran out. It was still a little light, for the summer was upon them. The girl went to the stable, from which the sound of voices came. "Papa," called Marianne, "come, do you know how late it is?"

"By the clock, no; by my appetite, yes," answered her father, appearing at the door. "Come, give an account of yourself. Where have you been hiding all the afternoon? In the woods with the other wild things, I'll be bound."

Marianne nodded. "That is exactly where; it is so lovely to be out of doors when summer is coming. I can't bear to be pent up in the house. We met a pedler."

"We?"

"Yes; Victor and I."

"Ah, Victor was with you?"

"We met in the woods, and came back together. It was Victor who was showing the pedler the way to Fort Schlosser, and they came my path so — See my bracelet, papa. Isn't it odd?"

He examined it gravely. "Where did you get it?"

"From the pedler, who got it from an old squaw. Victor bought it for me."

"Did you happen to hear the pedler's name?"

"Asa Peaslee."

Her father nodded. "I know him. A sharp Connecticut Yankee, yet not half a bad man. No doubt he drove a good bargain. I wouldn't parade this thing around. Keep it safe. I saw one something like it once, and it served as a sort of talisman. This may be useful to you some day."

"Then I will keep it safely. Where is Royal?"

"Where, but at his grandmother's. He'd better live on the other side of the river altogether, it seems to me. He's his mother's own son — more French than American."

"While I am more American than French," put in Marianne, with a satisfied air. "I wish I were as fair as you, papa. It does not seem right that I should have this dark skin with my blue eyes."

"Your skin is all right," replied her father, pinching her cheek. "You have a good healthy color."

"Papa," said Marianne, suddenly changing the subject, "shall you fight if there is a war? And what will Royal do?"

"What he is doing now, no doubt — hob-nobbing with his French cousins. And I? Well, you needn't ask the son of an old Continental what he will do. There is going to be war fast enough, and I shall be in it; that's all."

"And Royal?" Marianne repeated.

Her father compressed his lips. "Let us go in; your mother will be waiting, and you know she does hate to have a good meal spoiled."

Arm in arm they walked slowly toward the house, the little girl and her tall father. On the doorstep the man paused and put his hands upon his daughter's shoulders. "See here, daughter," he said, "don't discuss this matter of war before your mother; she feels it sorely, and no wonder. We'll laugh and be merry while we can. Victor is in there?"

"Yes."

"So much the better. He's a good chap, if a little slow."

No reference was made to the matter, which was now becoming a serious one in the family. Mrs. Reyburn asked, "Where is Royal?" and her husband

replied, "At his grandmother's," and there the subject dropped. Marianne set herself to playfully teasing her father and Victor, while her mother sat silent, keeping a furtively watchful eye upon her husband's countenance.

CHAPTER II

Across the River

TO Marianne the little trip across the river to the Canada side where her grandmother lived was always a pleasant outing, and on this June morning when she set out with Victor to row over, it was as fair a day as one could wish.

"Tell Royal I want him," Mrs. Reyburn had whispered at the last moment. There was a troubled look on her face which Marianne understood, and she was a little more quiet than usual when she joined Victor and the two stepped into the light canoe which was to take them over. A short walk beyond the landing and they would reach the house of her grandmother,—a typical country mansion of the French period. The house was but one story high, but its sloping roof gave ample space for bedrooms above, where peaked dormer windows let in the light. Though but one room deep, the house stretched along for nearly a hundred feet, and with its many out-buildings was a cosey and comfortable abode.

"My husband was a seigneur on his own domain," Madame Desvouges was wont to tell her granddaughter proudly; "and though the old régime has passed away, we do not forget what we have been." A quick, alert, bright-eyed, little woman was Madame, despite her seventy years; independent to a degree, and with the help of Victor, her adopted son, she managed her estate fairly well. The old French customs were religiously observed, and Madame never failed to impress upon the younger generation that they should not forget their family pride however much their fortunes were altered.

"You are very silent, Marianne," remarked Victor, as the canoe sped through the water.

"I am thinking," she replied, dabbling her fingers softly in the ripples. "Out upon the war! as they used to say in Shakespeare's day. Isn't it funny, Victor, that I like Shakespeare, and Royal does not care a sou for him? That in itself should prove me more English than French—not English, but American," she added quickly. "And yet when I listen to grandmother's tales and hear how my grandfather fought under Montcalm and De Levis, I feel myself glow all over. My father would have been on the English side then if he had been of that day, and—O dear! who can tell just what is right?"

"One cannot," returned Victor, "and that is what

I say when I am urged by these bombasts to join the army. Fine enough, say I, when the war is all on paper, but to go through life maimed is not so fine. If I must defend yonder home, I will shed my life's blood for grand'mère and Victorine, but—" He shrugged his shoulders, and Marianne lapsed again into silence until they had reached their landing-place. She was full of the thought of her brother Royal, and of how he would take her mother's message.

When she arrived at her grandmother's door she was geeted in voluble French: "But yes, you have arrived. I told Royal you would come, ma chère, though he would not be certain of it."

"Where is he?" Marianne asked eagerly, after kissing her grandmother on each brown cheek.

"He?" Madame spread out her fingers. "Who knows? He is at Queenston or perhaps at Fort George. One knows not just where. He is not like Victor whom one can always count upon." She patted the girl upon the shoulder and led her into the house. In the corner of the large room by a clumsy loom stood a little figure busy at work over the threads of flax. Above the clatter of the shuttles arose a voice sweet, clear, and pathetic, singing a Canadian boat-song through which thrilled a wild note. Marianne stopped short to listen.

Suddenly the clattering stopped and the figure turned, showing a face beautiful by reason of wild-rose color, soft luminous hazel eyes, a mouth whose sweetness hid its sad curves. A mass of auburn hair touched by glints of sunlight fell over the shoulders, unhappily much misshapen, and the long arms were those of a hunchback. This was Victor's twin sister, Victortine La Rue, born in that terrific "Hungry Year," and left motherless and fatherless by reason of it. But for Madame Desvouges the two tiny babies would have followed their mother, but wrapped in softest skins they were carried to the seigniory; and cuddled side by side in a basket like two kittens, they were tended, nursed, and saved from starvation, becoming as her own children to Madame Desvouges. In her tenth year the little Victortine had developed spinal trouble; and though by means of an out-door life she finally grew quite strong and well, the twist in her back could never be lessened and she arrived at womanhood a hunchback. Yet withal, so sweet and lovable she was that she seemed a sunbeam in the house and had her compensations in the love given her and in the power to use a beautiful voice. Her face lighted up as she saw Marianne, and she made a swift step forward.

"I knew you would come when Victor stayed all night."

Marianne laughed. "That is what grandma said.

I wanted to come, Victorine, and Victor said he would bring me. I have something to show. See, isn't it pretty?" She held up her arm, from which dangled the Indian bracelet.

Victorine showed immediate interest. Like most afflicted persons, she had an intense love of adornment, and decked her own person almost fantastically. "It is not so pretty as it is curious," she replied, examining the bawble. "Where did you get it?"

"Victor got it for me of a pedler." She dived down into her pocket and produced the ribbon. "And this is for you. Victor is too generous to me." She shook out the ribbon and held it against Victorine's hair. "It looks well with those curly locks; it is blue and green, and you must wear it."

"Oh, no," protested Victorine, "not when Victor bought it for you."

"He had no business to," laughed Marianne; "and after all, he did not really buy it, for the pedler threw it in for good measure. Besides, as I said before, Victor is too generous to me."

Victorine looked at her steadily, stroking the silken bit of ribbon with her slim fingers. "I wonder if you really think so, Marianne."

"What? That Victor is generous? Of course. Don't you know he is?"

"You are a sly puss," said Victorine, "but in my

opinion the ribbon will be much more becoming to you than to me."

"Nonsense! nothing of the kind! I won't have it. I told Victor so as we were coming over. I'll tie it around the cat's neck if you don't take it." And she darted across the room to catch up a sedate tabby which was blinking in the doorway.

"Stop, Marianne!" cried Victorine. "You shall not do that. I will take it and keep it; and when you want it, come to me."

"I'll do nothing of the kind. You must promise to wear it, or I'll do as I said. Here, Gris-Gris, come and have your collar on."

Victorine caught the ribbon away and shook her head at the laughing girl. "There is no doing anything with you, Marianne. I'll take it, since you will have it so. Come, tell me what is the news."

The roguish smile died from Marianne's face, and she said soberly: "News enough and of an ill sort. My father is pleased to join the American forces in their fight against the British, and Royal—" She paused. "You know about Royal, Victorine."

"Yes," she replied slowly. "He has joined the loyalists of Canada."

Marianne started. "Do you mean that he has really enlisted? Are you sure?"

"He said last night that he meant to do so to-day."

"Dreadful! dreadful!" murmured Marianne. "If I could but see him and dissuade him before it is too late. My mother's last words were to bid him come home at once."

"There is a bare chance of his not having gone," returned Victorine. "Wait a moment. He will not come back if he knows you are here."

"But he will come for you,—yes, I know that,—or for grandmother." She turned to where her grandmother was covering the bake-kettle with coals.

After the fleur-de-lis ceased to wave over Canada Madame Desvouges had been obliged to live very frugally and simply. Though many of the old customs were kept up, the retinue of servants had dwindled to one stout maid for the house, and the manor was let out in parcels to those who lived humbly in their log houses. Madame Desvouges declared herself a loyal subject of Great Britain, but it was none the less a sore trial to her when her daughter married a man of the English-speaking race. She comforted herself later with the knowledge that her grandson was more French than English, and she adored him. It had been a dream, which even now she could not relinquish, that Royal and Victorine would marry, and for Victor there was Marianne. So would the younger generation return to the French side of the border, and all would be as she desired. No one spoke English in her house-

hold, and at Marianne's "Grand'mère, j'ai quelque chose de vous dire," she smiled and straightened herself up from bending over the bake-kettle.

"I wait to hear," she replied. "What is the secret?"

"Grandma, Royal will bear arms against his own father. Think how terrible, how terrible! He did not know, perhaps, that our father really intended to fight; but he will, my father will, and it will break my mother's heart. Dear grandma, I beg you will entreat Royal to leave fighting for others to do, and to come home. If my father must leave his home, what will my mother and I do with no natural protector?"

"You will come here; that is easy enough," returned her grandmother, with some satisfaction. But immediately after she said: "It is indeed, my child, a sad condition of affairs, yet I fear it is too late to change it. Thank Heaven, Victor has no palm-itching for a soldier's pay. He will not fight unless driven to it in order to defend his home. For my own part, I see no use in this war—a folly all around. We, who are neither English nor Americans, what have we to do with the quarrels of Great Britain and the States? Why cannot Royal, and your father, too, be content to remain at home peaceably and let others fight out their differences?"

"For the same reason," returned Marianne, slowly,

"that my grandfather could not content himself; he made his stand for France in the New World. My father comes of Revolutionary stock, and he will not stand by and see his country threatened a second time by British oppression."

"*Mon Dieu de la France!*" cried Madame, lifting her hands dramatically. "Hear the child talk. Had your grandfather lived, he would have returned to France, as did many of his comrades; and I am not less French because we did not go, nor is your mother less French."

"And it was France who helped America win her freedom in the Revolutionary War; so now will I, who am half French, become indifferent to the cause which La Fayette made his own?"

Her grandmother threw her arms around her and hugged her. "You are such an orator, of such a persuasive tongue, that I have no more to say. This all may be as a bag of wind; a prick in the side, and pouf! it goes. Yet I will have a word with Royal if it be not too late. See, here he comes with Victorine."

Marianne looked up to see a young man, tall of stature, dark-eyed, and dark-haired. Just now his eyes were bent upon the ground as he listened to what Victorine had to say to him. He stopped short when he reached the door.

"Royal, my son," said his grandmother, "your mother wants her boy. She will need you, Royal, if your father goes to the war. And as you are a dutiful son, you will go home to-day and say: Here I am, my mother, to be your comfort and protection when my father is gone." She spoke in a gentle, half-questioning voice.

The young man made no reply, but dropped upon the bench by the door, and with elbows on knees and head held between hands he kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. Marianne went up to him. "Royal," she said, imitating her grandmother's gentle tone, "mother wants you. Her last words to me as I left home were: 'Tell Royal I want him.' You will go, brother?"

He rose to his feet. "Yes, I will go."

"And you will stay," urged his grandmother.

He was silent a moment, and then he faced them with: "That must be as I am ordered. I shall hardly be allowed on the American side, for to-morrow I report for duty."

Marianne recoiled aghast. "For duty! Oh, Royal, have you—"

"Yes, I have joined the army under Brock."

Marianne's eyes showed the distress she felt as she said: "And that means you will arm yourself against your own father. A shot fired by you may be the cause of his death."

"Don't!" Royal lifted his hand. "It may be the other way. At all events, it is too late. I cannot retreat from the step I have taken."

"Oh, but why, why did you need to fight at all?" cried his sister, with tears in her voice.

"Because I come of a fighting race, I suppose," he replied with a half attempt at a smile. "There is no use in saying anything now, Marianne; the thing is done, and I have as good a right to fight for my cause as father has for his."

"No, but his ought to be yours, too. Are you not an American born? Did not your father's father fight for your country's freedom? and how could you join hands with his enemies?" cried Marianne, passionately.

"Hold, my children," interrupted their grandmother. "Do not quarrel here on the verge of a separation. Royal may have been hasty, but he thinks he is right, and if he finds he is not, he can lay down his arms and remain at home. No doubt, after all, it is all bluster; much smoke and no fire. Go home, Royal, and see your mother and then return to us; that is, if the way is open to you."

"Oh, hostilities have not begun; one can cross as he wills, if he but knows how."

"And I will go, too," decided Marianne.

Royal looked uneasy.

"You don't want me," pouted Marianne. "I think, when you are so soon going to leave home, that you are very unfeeling not to want your only sister to be with you all she can."

"It is not that," returned Royal, "but I do not want my father to know, for more than one reason."

"I would not tell him."

"It would only make it that much harder for you to have to guard your speech, and to feel that you were keeping a secret from him."

"Yes, I know, for you do not love father as I do, else you could not do this thing."

"Tut, tut!" Madame Desvouges interfered. "I would not say such things, Marianne."

"But it is true. He cannot love his father if he be willing to side with his mortal enemies."

"I do love my father," said Royal, sullenly; "but he will not understand me, and he never has tried to. He has always been annoyed because I am not like his people."

"Oh, no, Royal, not annoyed. He has wished you were like them; that is all. And you are like them in self-will," she added, under her breath. "At all events," she went on after a miserable pause, "he loves you, and so does mother, and it will break their hearts to have you do this."

"But I have told you I cannot undo it. Don't you

understand?" said Royal, impatiently. "Would you rather I were shot as a deserter? There is no use staying here arguing the question. I will go home and see them. I shall tell my mother, and I will take leave of my father, but I will not let him know that it is a real farewell. And I want you to stay here, Marianne."

His grandmother nodded. "It will be better all around, Marianne."

"But I want to go," persisted the girl.

"You will remain," said her grandmother, drawing herself up to her fullest height, and speaking in the voice that Marianne had learned as a little child to obey. There was no appeal when grand'mère spoke in that way, and the girl yielded, turning away with tears in her eyes to enter the house. She sat down by the loom which Victorine had left, and idly fingered the linen threads. She was hurt and indignant at Royal's attitude, and half resentful at her grandmother's authoritative manner. "I've a mind to go, after all," she murmured.

"You wouldn't do that," said a voice at the vine-covered window.

Marianne started. "Victor!" she exclaimed. "You heard it all?"

"Yes, and you would not make it harder for your mother and father."

"No, of course not; but how could I?"

"By that telltale face of yours, which cannot hide a secret. Your father would be sure to suspect something unusual; then your sense of loyalty would make it hard for you not to tell him he had one of Brock's soldiers under his roof, and it would be hard for him to have to give up that soldier to the authorities."

"Oh!" Marianne's eyes grew big. "Would all that happen? Would he have to give him up?"

"He might consider it his duty."

"How dreadful! but Roy is not a Britisher."

"He is the same thing in the eyes of the Americans."

Marianne sighed and repeated: "How dreadful! I wish Royal had sense enough to stay at home and let the real Britishers fight their own battles."

"If your father goes, you and your mother will come here?" Victor spoke with more than indifferent curiosity.

"I don't know. It will be as mother and father say, of course; and—oh, Victor, is it really getting dangerous to cross the river? Will it make any difference which side one is on?"

"Yes, I suppose so. This will be the enemy's country; it is so even now; and one must be known to be a non-combatant to get over."

"O dear! O dear! what a mess it all is! I don't

like it at all." She arose and began to pace the room. Victor, leaning on the window-sill, watched her.

Presently she came back to the window. "Has Royal gone?"

"I believe so. Your grandmother and Victorine are coming in."

Marianne scrambled over the window-sill. "I want to get out of this enemy's country," she explained, half laughing. "I am afraid I shall be captured. I am going to hide, and then grand'mère will be sorry she told me I must stay."

"Where are you going to hide?" Victor asked, smiling.

"It wouldn't be hiding if I told; and if you dare to watch me, I'll never forgive you. I won't speak to you for a week if you say a word about it; you must just say that you don't know where I am. Promise."

"What will you give me if I promise?"

"I'm sure I don't know. What do you want?"

"A kiss will do."

"That's easy enough given; yet what have you done with all those I have been giving you ever since I was a baby?"

"I have them all, and I will give them back to you whenever you say so."

Marianne laughed. "You silly old Victor; if you are so ready to return what I give you, I'll give you

no more. You'll have to promise anyhow, or I'll never, never give you one more. I'm getting too big to kiss, anyhow, even if I am not as tall as you."

"You're only a foolish little girl still," returned Victor, teasingly ; "and I'm your uncle, so you must obey me."

"I never did, and I'm not going to begin now, at my age. Besides, it is different from what it would be if you were really my uncle; then perhaps I would obey you. I am glad you are not."

"So am I, monstrously glad."

"You unkind creature! My uncle, Tom Reyburn, adores me."

"I am willing he should, but that is not saying that I —"

"What? That you do or you don't?"

"Why didn't you wait for me to finish? You have broken the thread of my speech now, and I cannot tell what I meant to say."

Marianne gave her shoulders a shrug and made a face at him. "Stay right here for five minutes," she commanded. "Don't dare to move or you'll be sorry." She gave one look back to see if he intended to do as she had ordered, and then ran off, not pausing till she had reached the river. She was in time to see her brother's canoe half over, but she had no intention of following him; though she unfastened a little boat

from where it was tied, and, getting in, was soon paddling up-stream.

It was nearly dark when she reappeared at her grandmother's, looking half ashamed and half defiant.

"Have you been over to your home?" asked Victorine, quickly.

"No, I have not," replied Marianne, nonchalantly, "I have simply been entertaining myself as I could. I have been where I was neither scolded, starved, nor frowned upon."

"You are a saucy girl," said her grandmother. "You ought to have known that we would worry about you."

"You needn't have done that. You know I am perfectly at home anywhere around here. I know the country thoroughly."

"But you do not know war," returned her grandmother, gravely. "Girls would best bide at home when battles are in prospect."

"Where were you, Manny?" asked Victorine, coaxingly.

"Oh, up the river a little way. I went to see some of my Indian friends, if you must know, and I learned several things I did not know before."

"I hope one of them was obedience to your elders," said grand'mère.

Marianne put her head to one side with an air of giving serious thought to the remark. "I didn't have

to learn that. I never disobey," she said after a moment.

"You were bidden to remain this side the river."

"Well, grand'mère, and can you say I did not?" laughed Marianne. Then she went up and kissed her. "I didn't disobey; please say I didn't."

"Nevertheless you might as well have done so for all the peace of mind I have had over it, as if it were not enough to worry over one grandchild's impetuosity; but I must needs have another's naughtiness to keep me in an affright all day."

Marianne was at once penitent. "I was naughty; I confess it, granny, dear. I wanted to do something to tease you, but I didn't think it would really put you in an affright. I am sorry. I am, really."

"Then go and call Victor, and come eat your supper," replied her grandmother, mollified by this contriteness.

Marianne was only too glad to obey. She had expected a scolding and had escaped better than she had any reason to think she deserved.

CHAPTER III

A House Divided

WHEN Royal returned the next morning, he maintained a stolid indifference, which Marianne felt covered a real regret at his impetuous decision. He would not talk, and gave her no further information than that he had told his mother the step he had taken and had made his farewells.

"Does father know?" Marianne asked.

Royal was silent for a moment, then he answered, "No."

"Oh, what will he say?" Marianne exclaimed.

Royal did not reply, but ground an inoffensive dandelion into the earth at his feet. The two were standing in the orchard, whither Royal had followed his sister. She watched the gloom gather upon his face more and more deeply, and said, with a sisterly attempt at cheerfulness: "Oh, well, it may all blow over very soon, and at all events you don't have to serve more than this first term of enlistment; and since you are only in the militia, you won't have to be at camp all

the time like the regulars, and can stay here at grand-mamma's, and that will be almost like being at home."

Royal smiled a little. "But you will be on the other side of the river," he said, "and it will soon be not so easy to come back and forth. As it is, we could scarcely do it but that we are known at the ferry. When I am a soldier on this side, and you are the daughter of a soldier on that—"

Marianne put her hands over her ears. "I won't hear it. You don't mean this is a real good-by, Royal? Why, I thought I'd see you a dozen times,—that you could pop in when you pleased."

"That will not be possible."

"And this is truly adieu?" She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him over and over. Then suddenly flung herself from him and down on the grass, where she lay sobbing.

Royal watched her for a few minutes before he went over and shook her shoulder gently. "See here, Marianne," he said, "I had one scene yesterday with mother. She vows she will not face my father with the news of my enlistment, and—and I depended upon you to do it. Sit up, there's a good girl, and listen to me."

Marianne obeyed, wiping her wet eyes and turning her tear-stained face toward her brother.

"I confess I may have been in too great haste

about this matter," he continued. "I was at Queenston one day when the subject was put before us in this way: the Americans desire the annexation of Canada; if we would not be merged into that hodge-podge of nationalities, we must stand up for ourselves and fight, that Canada may keep her individuality."

The tears were gone from Marianne's eyes, and now they flashed with indignation. "Her individuality, indeed! Are you forsooth an Englishman, Royal Reyburn? Is Canada French? Hasn't she given her allegiance to Great Britain? And if she is not fighting under the French flag, why are not the American Stars and Stripes good enough for you? You are an American born, and it is all nonsense, this talk of Canada's rights. If you were talking of her rights as a French province, that would be another thing; but when you begin about English rights for her, I don't see why it wouldn't be just as good for her individuality, as you call it, if she were an American possession. She isn't French, either way you fix it. One would suppose that England had suddenly become a part of France to hear you talk."

"At all events, she doesn't want to belong to the United States," persisted Royal.

"I don't see what business it is of yours if she doesn't," said Marianne, sharply. "Besides, that is not what the war is about. Father told me the whole

trouble. It is because the English will not allow us free trade, and they impress American-born sailors whenever they can, just to be overbearing bullies. We are not going to stand having our liberties abused in that impudent way, and we are not going to allow our own real American sailors to be stolen from us by Johnny Bull. Canada has nothing to do with the question. Besides, you are not Canadian; you are an American."

"I am Canadian now," said Royal, soberly.

Marianne jumped to her feet. "Thank Heaven, I am not. Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes! Down with the British! Death to the redcoats! Hurrah for America! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" She caught off her apron and waved it around her head excitedly. "There!" she cried, stamping her foot, "there! I am an American, and I hope you remember it, and your father is an American; so was your grandfather, and your great-grandfather, and your great-great-grandfather. Now, what have you to say?"

"Take care!" Royal warned. "You are on British soil, and war is declared."

"Maybe you would like to arrest me," Marianne taunted, dancing before him mockingly. "Maybe you'd like to have your sister and your father and your whole family in some vile prison-ship or some loathsome prison? Such a noble ambition!"

"Marianne!" Her brother spoke impatiently. "This

is perfectly childish. I have done what I believe to be right, and I am not going to be taunted out of my duty by a silly girl. If you will not make your adieux to me in a sisterly fashion, then we will part without them."

He turned on his heel and walked off.

Marianne ran after him and caught him by the arm. "Royal, Royal, don't go away like that. I will do my best to spare my father. I will tell him you thought you were doing right. Don't go without kissing me good-by; please don't."

He stopped, a smile lighting up his dark face. "That sounds more like my little sister." He lifted her up bodily and kissed her two or three times. "Good-by, my little girl. I hope to see you soon again. You must try to be son and daughter to our father and mother. Perhaps my father has not meant to be hard on me, but he has treated me as if I were an infant to be told not to go beyond the garden gate, and I could not stand it. That's the true reason, Marianne, only don't tell any one. Politics have little to do with it."

"No, I will not tell. But he doesn't mean to be hard on you, Roy, I know he doesn't. He forgets that you are a child no longer. He treats me as if I were a babe in arms, and I rather like it, so why should not you? My grandmother says you are like father in disposition, that he will not be controlled by another's will, and neither will you; I suppose that is the way of it.

Adieu, Royal. I will be good, and I will stay at home and try to be a comfort to father and mother."

He lifted her up once more to kiss her, and they parted.

Marianne returned to the house. Victorine was not singing at the loom. She was very soberly engaged in scouring a pewter dish. Her beautiful hair fell down each side her face so that Marianne could not see her eyes, in which she would have discovered traces of tears. "Where is Victor?" asked the younger girl, abruptly.

"He is in the garden," Victorine answered in a quiet voice.

"I want him to take me home. I want to go now, right off."

"Why need you do that?" her grandmother asked from the buttery.

"I must. Royal has gone, and they are all alone there; they will need me. I promised Royal that I would go."

"She is right," commented Madame Desvouges. "We must do without her for a while, Victorine. This troublesome war is going to put a stop to the freedom of going back and forth as one wishes; and besides, they say the country about is like to be full of soldiers, and it will be best that maids remain at home. We will keep our eyes on Royal, my child, and no doubt there will be found a way to keep up communication. If your father

goes to the war, you and your mother will, of course, come here, and we will all be together."

Marianne did not reply, for her mind was made up on that score. So she kissed her grandmother and Victortine good-by with more than usual warmth, and set out with Victor toward her home.

"You will only ferry me over, Victor," she said to him, "and the rest of the way it will be all right." At the opposite shore she held out her hand. "Good-by, Victor."

He took the offered hand in both his. "And why adieu so seriously, Marianne? I shall see you again soon; to-morrow, it may be."

"You may not," she returned.

"Then I will go all the way with you."

"No, you had better go back. I don't want you. The way is easy enough, and I shall have work to do when I get there."

"I can help you with it."

She shook her head. "Not with the kind that I have on hand. Go back, please." She pushed him gently by the shoulders, and he obediently stepped into the boat and picked up his oars.

"Very well, Marianne. Good-by for to-day, if you say so, but you do not prevent me from seeing you soon again."

She watched the little boat push off, and then she

took her way up the path toward the road which led to her home. It was still early in the day, but the warmth of a summer day brooded over the woods and fields. Usually Marianne noted every wayside blossom, the songs of the birds in the trees, and the drift of white clouds floating across the sky; but to-day she was intent upon reaching home, and gave but scant heed to the pleasures of the way. She walked rapidly, and her hair clung in little damp rings around her face when she appeared before her mother.

"You are returned," said Mrs. Reyburn. "I am glad, Marianne, that you did not tarry. They are all well? Yes?"

"Quite well, and sent their love and a hundred messages, as usual." Marianne sat down and fanned herself vigorously with her hat. "I saw Royal," she announced abruptly.

Her mother's lips quivered. "His father does not know," she said tremulously.

"No, I know he does not. Where is father?"

"In the shop. There was some tool to be mended, and he took it there. I heard him hammering upon it a moment ago."

Marianne did not waste words. She picked up her hat again and went toward the door; then something in her mother's face made her turn back. "Do not worry, mother mine," she said. "I am going to tell father,

and I think I can make him understand that he is not to blame Royal too much." She took her mother's head between her hands and kissed the shining bands of dark hair before she started again upon her errand.

Walter Reyburn was hammering away at a bit of iron, giving powerful blows, which brought out the muscles on his bare arm. Marianne stood watching him. What a great, strong man he was; what mighty sinews and strong, brawny hands! It was funny, she told herself, that any one as little as she should have such a big father, and what was funnier still, she was not in the least afraid of him. She stood poised upon the sill of the rude work-shop until her father caught sight of her.

"Well," he exclaimed, "you are back I see, bright and early, too."

"Yes, I would have come yesterday, but—" She paused.

"But what?" Her father examined carefully the bit of iron he had been pounding.

"Only they would not let me. Grandmamma said I shouldn't, and I had to mind her."

"Yes, of course. I'm glad you've come, though. Mother needs you. She doesn't seem quite as bright as usual; something on her mind. I fancy she suspects I am going off as soon as I get the call."

Marianne was silent for a minute, then she said bravely, "That isn't all."

"It isn't? She isn't ill, is she?"

"No. It's—it's about Royal."

"What about Royal?" Her father turned his back to her and picked up his hammer again, weighing it in his hand aimlessly. There was dead silence for a moment.

"He's joined the army," said Marianne, in a low voice, after she had summoned sufficient courage to make the statement, "the army over there at—at Queenston."

The hammer dropped with a thud, and the strong man grasped the rough work-bench for support. Marianne ran up to him and leaned her face against his sleeve. "Father, dear," she whispered, "don't be hard on him. He is a man full grown. You were married and were his father at his age, and—and—I think if you'd only let him feel that he is not a child. You see he wanted to let you understand that he is old enough to do what he had made up his mind to. I don't believe he would have gone if you hadn't laid down the law and said he shouldn't do anything except what you told him he could. Grandmamma says he has a strong will just like yours."

"Mine never led me to be a traitor to my country," replied her father, in a stifled tone.



"She took one of his big strong hands in hers and stroked it gently"

It was a critical moment, and Marianne felt the need of the right word which would turn her father's bitterness of spirit into something gentler. She took one of his big strong hands in hers and stroked it gently. "Father," she went on, "do you remember that when your father joined the American army that his grandfather called him a traitor, and you have often said that your great-grandfather thought he was right in being a Tory at the beginning of the war, though he changed his opinions later. You know Royal feels as if he belonged to Canada as much as to the States, and if he thinks he is right to fight for his mother's country instead of his father's, do you think that makes him altogether bad?" Marianne's arm had stolen around her father's neck, and she looked at him with anxious eyes.

"You don't understand how a man feels about these things," her father replied, with a little more heartiness of tone. "I don't think Royal altogether bad, but isn't it a terrible thing for father and son to be arrayed against each other?"

"It is dreadful, dreadful, but it was so in the last war, and perhaps it will never come to that really. You may neither of you have a chance to fight at all; and if you do, even then you would forgive Royal and let him come again, wouldn't you?"

Her father was silent for a little. "We will talk of

that when the time comes," he said at last. "There may be no home to come to."

"Oh!" Such a possibility had never entered Marianne's head. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. While I never for a moment doubt the righteousness of our cause nor the result of our arms, there are chances to be taken, and war on this border land means perhaps destruction. That brings us to something else I want to say. I had hoped when I joined our troops, that Royal would at least remain at home and look after you and your mother, even if he did not give active assistance to our side. Since this is not to be expected now, I see nothing for you to do but to go to your grandmother's."

"Mother may go, but I am not going," replied Marianne, decidedly.

"You will go where your mother does."

"I will stay where my father stays. I am not going to grandmamma's, any such thing, and I don't believe mother will either. We are going to stay right here where you are. Do you suppose I want to be over there in that nest of Britishers? If I were a man, I'd shoulder a gun with you, and we'd march off together. As it is, I mean to stay in the United States of America. There!"

Her father looked at her half amused. She had left his side and was standing before him. He took her two

hands and gave them a hearty shake. "Well, little girl, I've one loyal child, anyhow, I'm happy to see. Stay you shall, while there is any chance of safety. It may be that you are right and that there is more bluster than danger."

Yet a few days later Marianne, looking toward the foot of the cliffs in the rear of Lewiston, saw the fields white with the tents of Van Rensselaer's encampment, and then war seemed very near home.

Her father was not yet in active service, and brought home the news of a cessation of hostilities. Then came the information that Hull had surrendered, not only Detroit but the whole of Michigan, to the enemy, and the troops under Van Rensselaer chafed under their enforced inaction when they saw, marched in ostentatious parade on the other side of the river, the unhappy prisoners taken at Detroit.

Then came the battle of Queenston, with its disheartening ending, when a stolid body of militia saw their companions, who had started out so bravely and who, reinforced, could easily have won the day,—these they saw overpowered and made prisoners; that, too, after their fierce fight, when they had attained to their position by making the perilous climb up the heights of Queenston. A brave fight it was for those of the American troops who were in it, and all glory is theirs.

It was with a great fear in her heart that Marianne

heard the news. She had watched the battle from the American shore, had beheld the dead and wounded brought back in boats, had witnessed the stubborn refusal of the militia to advance to the relief of those who were so dangerously in want of reënforcements; and at last, when all was over, the great question that arose to her lips was: Where is my father? Was he among those cowards on the bank? If so, he was safe — yet a coward. Was he among those who had valiantly scaled the heights, but to be captured at last after their noble defence? If so, he was a prisoner. Together mother and daughter watched and waited all that day and the next.

About dusk of the second evening came the sound of footsteps along the path leading to the kitchen door. Marianne jumped to her feet. "It is father!" she cried.

"No, no, it is but a neighbor," her mother declared, afraid to encourage hope.

"But it must be father," persisted Marianne, flinging open wide the door. But there was disappointment in her tones as she exclaimed, "Oh, it is only you!"

Her mother came rapidly forward, asking, "Who is it, Marianne?"

"Only Victor."

"Victor? And how comes he here?"

"I have come to take you home with me," he answered, entering the room.

"I shall not go," Marianne objected decidedly.

"You'd better," returned Victor.

"I shall wait here for my father. Oh, Victor, have you heard anything of him? We do not know whether he was with those who crossed; and we have heard that there has been a fearful battle, and that the Indians who came rushing in at the end of it under that half-breed, Captain Norton, were the cause of our losing the day. The militia, they say, were so terrified at the sight of the painted Indians, that they refused to cross the river, and go to the assistance of their friends. I know my father was never afraid of an Indian; he is too used to them, and so we fear he is hurt, or that worse has happened."

"Nothing worse has happened, Marianne. He is wounded, to be sure, and is at our house. It was a stiff fight, and General Brock was killed, and your General Scott, with some others, officers of high rank, have been taken prisoners."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Mrs. Reyburn. "We do not care to hear of those; what we are waiting to know is my husband's condition."

"He is wounded severely, but not dangerously. It will be some time before his wounds are healed."

"Oh, and I said I would never leave this side; I told him that." Marianne clasped her hands. "And now he is over there, and Royal—do you know anything of him?"

"It was he who obtained consent to have your father brought to our house. You will go to him?" He turned to Mrs. Reyburn.

"I? Yes, and quickly, too. Come, Marianne, we must go at once."

But Marianne still hesitated. "Can I come back again?"

"I don't know," Victor answered. "You will be better off with us."

"Did father say I was to come?"

"I did not ask him. He was in no condition to talk."

Marianne stood uncertainly, twisting her apron around her finger. She did not want to be disloyal and break her promise to her father, but she longed to be with him, and she finally decided that it would be right for her to go, and she would find a way to get back when her father should have recovered. So she said, "I will go if mother does."

"To be sure you will," her mother replied. "No one questioned your doing otherwise. We can leave Jerusha in charge of the house, and Mark will no doubt attend to the other affairs. Go, Victor, and give him proper directions. Explain the situation, and he will understand that he is accountable. I think he will do his best, and I am sure of Jerusha. We will get ready at once. Make up a bundle of your clothing, Marianne; enough to last some time, but be quick about it."

CHAPTER IV

New Friends

BEFORE the night had settled down, Marianne found herself again under her grandmother's roof and by the side of the wounded man was her mother established. It was a much more comfortable state of things than to be left at home, still the girl chafed under the fact that she was in the enemy's country. Her feelings had been roused to their fullest extent by the fact that her father lay suffering from wounds inflicted by the Britishers, and she felt very bitter about it.

"You'd better make the best of it," Victorine told her, "and be thankful that you are all here together. It was a Providence, to my thinking, that your father was wounded thus early in the war, else there might have worse trouble come upon you."

"It is bad enough," Marianne returned; "yet when I think of those dead and dying men I saw brought over in the boats, I am thankful that my father was not one of them. The churches and houses at Lewiston are turned into hospitals, and the sounds of the groaning

and moaning is terrible. As you say, there is no doubt but that we are lucky to have father here instead of among strangers. I wonder if he knows that it was all Royal's doing, and that he found him among the wounded, and rescued him from those horrible savage Indians, and then went to headquarters, and begged that he might be taken here."

Victorine's eyes shone with a starry softness. "I don't think he does know, but he will some day. It was like Royal."

"Yes, but who wouldn't do it for his own father? Still, I am glad that Royal could rescue him, though I am sure father would have done the same for him."

"Poor Royal, he is quite used up over General Brock's death. He admired him greatly."

Marianne looked up. "Oh, I didn't know you had seen Royal. Has he been here?"

Victorine hesitated, then replied, "Yes, he has been here every day to inquire for his father."

"And I have not seen him." Marianne spoke in quite an injured tone.

"He thought you might not care to see him, knowing the outcome of the battle."

"It wasn't he who won the battle," sniffed Marianne, but she said nothing more about seeing her brother, and after a while burst out with, "It isn't very nice to be in a place where you don't dare to

speak your own mind, and where every one hopes your best friends will get beaten."

"They are our friends, too," returned Victorine. "We girls need not bother our heads over any part of the war except that which gives us wounded men to nurse. Grand'mère says our duty is that which is nearest at hand, and she nurses your father as tenderly as she would her own son."

"Of course she does; and if she didn't, there would be mother to do it."

"You are a discontent, Marianne."

"I am, just now. I like to be free, and I cannot speak my mind, nor run through the woods as I am used to doing, for fear I will meet some vile soldiers, and I cannot do this and that, so I have half a mind to run away."

"Where?"

"I shall not tell you."

Victorine laughed, but Marianne's words were something more than mere jest. She was busy forming a scheme which in time she meant to carry out, and which she dared not breathe to any one. It was when her turn came to sit with her father that she gave him the first intimation of what she desired to bring about.

"What is the news?" was his daily question when he was able to take an interest in what was going on. He depended upon Marianne for all his information,

for he knew her keen sympathy with his own cause would lead her to glean all the bits she could. She had her own methods of procuring her news, but she did not whisper the reports to any one but her father. She would tell him of the squabbles in the American army, of how General Van Rensselaer had been disgusted with the conduct of the militia and had asked to be relieved, and that General Smyth had taken his place, and many other newsy items.

"Where did you learn all this?" her father would ask.

"A little bird told me," Marianne would reply with a smile.

"What is a parole?" she asked one day.

"It is one's word given that he will not take arms against a foe within a given time, and so he is allowed freedom of a certain sort."

"All the militia and their officers who were taken prisoners in your battle were sent back to their own side, on parole. Are you a prisoner on parole?"

"No, I was unconscious when they picked me up and brought me here. I have been puzzling lately to know how I happened to be brought to my own mother-in-law's house, and who was the means of doing it."

After a moment's silence Marianne told him, "It was Royal."

Her father turned his face away, but made no comment when she gave him the details. After she had finished she looked cautiously around and whispered, "Father."

He turned his head toward her again, and with her face close to his she laid bare her scheme.

Her father listened attentively, and when she had concluded he said, "But your mother, and Victor, and grand'mère — you forget that it might reflect upon them, and perhaps do them an injury."

"I have thought about that," Marianne told him. "I think I can arrange it so it will do them no harm. Will you trust me, father?"

"You are pretty quick-witted, and — yes, I can't afford to miss a chance. I don't mean to submit to being a prisoner if there's a chance of freedom, but I'm not strong yet, and the only thing I object to in the matter is, that we do not consider your mother."

"Yes, I know; I think that is a difficulty, but I don't believe we ought to tell even her. I'll come back and get her after you are safe."

Her father laughed. "For up and down assurance, commend me to a little body of your size. It is a case of the elephant and the mouse. Well, Marianne, it's worth the trying, and it cheers me up to have one good staunch American at my side. You would have been a brave soldier if you had been a boy."

"Royal is a brave soldier," said Marianne, "but he just happens to be on the wrong side." With that she left the room, but this was not the last conversation her father had with her upon the subject of his escape.

The leaves were falling fast when the time at last seemed ripe for Marianne to venture upon the thing which she so long had in mind. The frequent warnings of her elders, not to venture far from home, were unheeded one crisp afternoon in November. And while her grandmother was at work preparing a ragout for Mr. Reyburn, and her mother was no less busy with Victorine at the loom, and Victor in the barn with the men, she slipped out of the house, and down through the orchard, which she skirted, reaching the road without being seen. Her destination was an Indian wigwam in the woods, back some distance. She hoped she would encounter no one on the way, which was one lonely enough to encourage her belief that she could make her journey unobserved. She sped along, crunching the crisp leaves under foot, and singing softly to herself. Once in a while she left the path to chase a saucy squirrel or to gather chestnuts from the fallen burrs, already opening to the frost.

It was upon one of these excursions from the bridle path, that she finally came to grief, for in following the quirks and turns of a specially impudent squirrel, she

stepped knee-deep in a bog so covered with fallen leaves as to be undistinguishable. She was floundering and floundering, and trying to get out as best she could, when she heard a stifled laugh, and looking up she saw a boyish face above a scarlet coat. The face was on a broad grin, and the mischievous brown eyes were running over with mirth.

Marianne was indignant. That any one should see her in this plight was bad enough, but to be so discovered by a Britisher was too much. "You are in a hole, little girl," said the Britisher. "How did you do it?"

This was adding insult to injury. "Little girl," indeed! Marianne maintained a furious silence, and made no effort at all to extricate herself.

"Oh, maybe you like it in there," continued the youth. "Perhaps you went in on purpose—for leeches or something."

"It's none of your business what I went in for," cried Marianne, roused to speech. "There is one thing I didn't go in for, and that is, impertinence from a vile Britisher."

"Aha! then I have a prisoner without capturing one,—the mud has done that for me; but if you will cry, 'God save the king,' I will help you out."

"I will not cry God save anything, for you,—no, not if I stay here forever."

"You won't? All right. I suppose you do not really want to be helped out?"

"Not by you, you horrid rude creature!"

"Because I wear a scarlet coat? Don't you like my uniform?"

"I like you less, and that is saying a great deal. If all the British army were as ungallant as you, I should think they'd better be wiped off the face of the earth, and I hope we'll do it."

"We? Who are we?"

"We Americans."

"If you are an American, what are you doing over here, this side the river?"

"That, too, is none of your concern."

"You are a saucy little child. But, say, look here, you are getting in deeper." He spoke with real earnestness, and looking about him he spied a stout log which he dragged to the edge of the bog and pushed toward Marianne, then stepping upon it, he dragged her out, despite her protests that she would rather stay there forever than have him touch her.

"You'd smother after a while, or if you didn't go deep enough for that, you'd catch your death," he said coolly. "I may be an ungallant Britisher, but I'm not going to see little girls smother to death before my very eyes."

"Little girl!" there it was again. "I'll thank you to

put me down," said Marianne, as soon as they had reached the solid ground.

"I'm going to. You are heavier than I thought. My! but you are a sight." He looked her over, and suddenly a half embarrassed expression came over his face. "Say," he remarked apologetically, "you are older than I thought you were. You see you were so far down in the mire that you looked like a small child. I didn't mean to be rude. I was only teasing."

"You were rude,—very,—but now that I see you nearer, I perceive that you are only a boy, and of course one cannot expect much politeness from hobbledehoys hardly out of their pinafores." Having given voice to this withering speech, Marianne turned her back and began to scrape the mud from her dress with a bit of bark.

"Here, let me help you do that," said Master Redcoat.

"You needn't trouble yourself," replied Marianne, magnificently, "I don't require your services. When I want the attentions of young gentlemen, I don't go to little boys dressed up in soldier clothes. You might spoil your boomaladdy coat, and your mother might put you to bed without your supper," she said mockingly.

The lad laughed. "You are giving it to me hot and heavy, aren't you? If you don't want me to help you, I'll sit down here and wait."

"Wait? What for?"

"For you."

"You can spare yourself the trouble. I don't want you. I know my way home."

"All the same, I'm going to stay. You can't possibly go far with your shoes heavy with mud and water, even if you should get the worst off your frock. Besides, it isn't safe for young ladies to go wandering around the woods when there are encampments of soldiers so near. My sisters are not allowed to do it."

"I'm not allowed to do it either, but I do when I have a purpose." The accent on "young ladies" mollified Marianne somewhat, but she could not resist adding, "I don't think it is much safer for little boys to be out alone."

"Look here! how old do you suppose I am?" asked the lad.

"Oh, I don't know—ten or twelve," returned Marianne, with marked indifference.

Her companion laughed. "That overdoes it. If you had said fifteen or sixteen, I might have felt aggrieved, for I believe I do look younger than I am. I am nineteen."

"You don't look it. How old do you suppose I am?"

"When you were in the bog, I thought you were eight or ten, but now you are out of it, I suppose you may be — let me see — fourteen."

"I am seventeen," replied Marianne, with dignity.

"Really? You aren't very big for your age."

"No, I am little, like mamma, though I look like my father. My brother, Royal, looks like mamma, but he is tall like father."

"You don't happen to mean Royal Reyburn, do you?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"Don't I? Why, he is up at our house now. I am in his regiment, and we belong to the same company. I wish I had known in the beginning that you were his sister."

"You would have been more polite, I suppose. It doesn't speak very well for your gallantry that you were not so anyhow, even though you didn't know who I was."

"That is so. I am a thoughtless fellow, and I am afraid I like to tease. Please don't tell Roy, or I'll never hear the last of it. He will be sure to tell Kate. By the way, I haven't told you my name. I am Jack Silverthorn. Now I will tell you what we'd better do: Our house is just back here a little way, and I think we'd better go up there and get you a dry rig."

"Oh, no, no! Appear before entire strangers in this condition? I could never do it."

"Oh, but you needn't see any one but Kate. We can sneak around the back way, and I will get Kate to

come to you and fix you up. You will like Kate ; every one does. Then I will see that you get home safely."

Marianne was still doubtful. " You said Roy was up there ? "

" Yes, I left him there with the girls when I came away."

" What girls ? "

" My two sisters, Kate and Sue. I came out to get some chestnuts. I forgot all about that."

Marianne's curiosity to see the two girls whose society her brother seemed to enjoy overcame her scruples, and she finally consented to accompany Jack to his house. The thought of the surprise she would give her brother quite drove away her ill feeling, and she became more gracious to her companion as they walked along. After all, he had done her a service, for, as she thought of it, she was in a predicament ; and if no one had chanced to come her way, even if she had not sunk deeper in the marsh, she might never have been able to extricate herself, and might have died of cold and starvation there in the lonely wood. At the thought of this she relented still further, and they were laughing gayly by the time they reached the outbuildings of the Silver-thorn farm. The lad had such a cheery, unaffected way with him, that in his presence Marianne forgot to be resentful ; but once his back was turned and she was left standing in the woodhouse, she realized that she

was in the hands of the enemy, and all her complacent acceptance of the situation died within her.

But the feeling did not have time to acquire bitterness before Kate Silverthorn appeared. Hers was a bonny face, showing honest blue-gray eyes, a nose just a trifle tip-tilted, and a mouth with sweet, smiling curves. Around her smooth forehead clustered curling brown locks, and her homespun gown, open at the neck, displayed a round white throat.

She hurried toward Marianne, holding out both hands. "This is too bad," she said. "Jack has just been telling me that you fell into a bog. How did you manage to get out?"

"He pulled me out," Marianne told her, half-reluctantly.

"That was good. I am glad he was there to do it. Let me take off those stiff shoes and stockings." She was down on her knees in a minute.

"No, no!" protested Marianne. But Kate laughed and said coaxingly: "Just let me do it. You have such little feet that unfortunately my shoes will not fit you, but Sue's will be a little better. I will run into the house and get them. Stay right here. No one will see you. I will lock the door behind me." And Marianne was left a veritable prisoner for a few minutes.

Presently Kate returned with a pan of warm water

and the necessary articles of clothing. "There," she said, "you'll soon look like yourself. I want to see your brother's face when you come in with me. He hasn't an idea that you are anywhere about."

"He is still here then?"

"Oh, yes, he comes nearly every day with Jack. You see, they are in the militia and can get away. There, you look fine! That blue is very becoming. Here, let me do your hair over." And the deft fingers soon piled up Marianne's hair in a becoming twist. Then Kate stood off to see the effect. "You are lovely in that gown," she declared. "It is quite long, and makes you look ever so much taller." She leaned over and kissed her visitor, and putting an arm around her, drew her into the garden. Marianne felt her charm and was unable to make the slightest resistance or to conjure up any feeling of animosity; instead, her heart warmed toward this unaffected, cheery girl as it had seldom done toward any one.

CHAPTER V

A Surprise for Royal

WHEN the two girls had reached the porch, Kate paused with a suppressed laugh, then she beckoned Marianne around to where, through a half-open doorway, she could see the group in the room beyond. Here, before the crackling open fire, sat Royal, Jack, and Sue. They were roasting chestnuts in the hot embers and appeared to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. Jack had emptied his pockets of the nuts he had remembered to gather at the last moment, and they lay in a shining brown heap upon the hearth.

"It was a sight, I assure you," Jack was saying, "to see the American's general, Van Rensselaer, with old Judge Peck in cocked hat and carrying a big sword, riding up and down, trying to get their brave troops to come over and fight us. But not an inch would they budge; they simply stood there and sulked. If that's the kind of soldiers we have to confront, who run at the first sound of a bugle, there will not be much of a war. We have a lot of prison-

ers. Did you see General Scott? He is a fine-looking fellow, if ever there was one."

"No, I didn't see him," returned Royal, "but I did see what must have been gall and bitterness to the other side,—their heroes of Tippecanoe and the garrisons of Mackinac and Detroit, five hundred or so, I should say. We marched them from Fort Erie to Fort George, and a parade we made of it that must have been a dose to the Americans."

Here he was interrupted by a figure which came flying in through the doorway,—a figure clad in a blue Empire gown, which, falling to her feet in soft folds, made her look taller than she really was. With scarlet cheeks and snapping eyes the girl cried: "American yourself, Royal Reyburn. Suppose it had been your father who was driven along like an ox, could you have borne to see it? For shame on you, to boast of the woes of your countrymen!"

Royal sprang to his feet, surprise and confusion written upon his face. "Marianne, how in the world came you here?" he exclaimed.

"I'll explain," Kate made answer. "Jack discovered your sister in the woods, where she had made a misstep and had fallen into a bog. You know what a rainy autumn we have had, and there are many treacherous spots under the fallen leaves. Jack pulled her out, it seems, and brought her here to us, that

she might dry her clothes and get rid of the mud upon them. If it were not for the discomfort she has undergone, I should be glad of an accident which has given us an opportunity of making her acquaintance." And she smiled down on Marianne, but met no response, for her visitor was still smarting from the effects of her brother's speech.

"You ought to suffer for it," Marianne went on, still addressing Royal, "and when your own father was wounded and is still a prisoner, it shows you are very heartless. You will be a prisoner yourself some day, and perhaps you will find it no laughing matter. As for General Van Rensselaer," she turned to Jack, "he was ill when he went on the field of battle. He carried away five painful wounds. Was he a coward? And General Scott wore his bravest regimentals, and by so doing became all the more a target for your men. Was he a poltroon? And I have heard even your own soldiers say that no fiercer nor braver attack was ever made than by our men who stormed Queenston Heights. Before this war is over you will not be laughing at the exploits of my countrymen, I'll venture to say; and by that time you may be old enough to do something more than play at soldiering." There was silence all around; but at last Royal said, a little awkwardly, "But, you see, Marianne, we didn't know you were listening."

"It doesn't make any difference who was listening. You can jest at the misfortunes of your own people, and that is enough. I want to go home, if you please," she said, turning to Kate. "I don't care if my clothes are wet."

"No, please," Kate's voice began coaxingly; "we'll not mention the war nor anything approaching it. We are not responsible for all the dreadful things that are done. Please let us be friends, even if we don't think exactly alike. You cannot, you ought not, to go home alone, for the country is overrun with all sorts of riffraff. What with the soldiers and the Indians and the refugees, no one on the border is safe. Do stay with us and don't mind what our brothers say; I'm sure I wouldn't." She shot a saucy look at Royal. "This is my sister Sue," she went on. "You haven't met her yet. Let me whisper something in your ear: Sue is half on your side. She always stands up for the Americans."

Here was one friend at court, and Marianne looked at Sue with more favor. This other sister was not unlike her brother and sister, except that her features were more delicate and her eyes and mouth more serious. She was taller and more slender than Kate, too. Marianne put her hand into Sue's extended one and responded to its warm pressure.

"You see," Sue told her, "we were Americans once;

that is, our grandparents were. The family lived in New York from the settlement of the colony till the Revolutionary War, and then my grandfather, being a loyalist, fled across the border into Canada."

"By loyalist you mean Tory," said Marianne, bluntly.

"Yes, if you like that word better. He called himself loyal to the king. He was an English subject before the war broke out, and he kept on being one; that was all. He thought he had a right to." A merry, mischievous look came into her eyes as she said this, and Marianne felt that she was showing rather an aggressive spirit.

"Of course he had a right to," she returned, with more exhibition of tolerance, "only I don't see how he could think he ought not to stay and fight for freedom."

"I don't either," Sue replied, "but then, you know, we don't all think alike. Don't let's talk about it any more. Come over here and sit down by the fire, and let Jack roast you some chestnuts. You deserve a big share, for he says you helped him to gather them."

There was no resisting this sweetness, and Marianne yielded, feeling that she had been rather ungracious, and that she might take a lesson from these sisters of him whom she had termed a discourteous boy. Yet in her character of young lady Jack's deference to her was very noticeable, and the members of the little

party before the fire soon were laughing and talking, becoming better friends every moment, though it was chiefly to the girls that Marianne unbent; for she did not intend that Jack should be admitted to her good graces. The short afternoon had nearly gone when she came to a realizing sense that it was getting very dark, and she looked quite aghast. "Oh," she cried, "I ought to have been home an hour ago."

"Don't go," begged her entertainers. "Stay all night with us. It is so late for you to be going home, and we should so like to have you."

"But they will miss me, and will wonder where I am and will be so worried," Marianne objected.

"I'll ride over and tell them where you are," Jack offered. "They know me. I have been there often."

"I never saw you there," Marianne returned.

"No; it has just happened that you haven't seen me. I don't always go to the house. We haven't been living very long on this place, for we used to live farther up the country; and that is why you and the girls have never met before, I suppose. Please stay."

"Do you like pumpkin cake?" Kate asked. "We are going to have some for supper."

If there was anything that Marianne did like, it was pumpkin cake; that mixture of pumpkin and corn-meal, sweetened with maple sugar, spiced, and baked,

had always been something that she considered a great treat. She looked out of the window. It certainly was dark. She looked down at her little boots drying before the fire.

Kate stooped to feel them. "They are still very wet, you see."

"You'd better stay, Marianne," said her brother; and Marianne doubtfully consented. "Only I don't like to have you go so far for me." She turned her blue eyes on Jack, and in them he saw the first gentle expression she had yet shown him.

"I'd go twice as far," he said, in a low, eager voice; and she felt her cheeks grow hot under his look. To hide her confusion she tossed her head with a saucy laugh. "Little boys don't usually like to go on errands," she said.

Jack laughed, too, and from one to the other passed a look of understanding.

"What are you two laughing at?" Kate asked.

"At each other," Marianne replied. Then she nodded to Jack. "If you like to go, very well; but I would rather stay, if I were you."

"So I would," Jack answered quickly.

"Oh, then I wouldn't have you go for the world," Marianne made haste to assure him; and Jack stammered that he only wanted to please her, and whatever she desired was his wish. And he made such a

mess of it that Kate had to come to his relief by saying: "We all know what you want to say, Jack. Just go along and hurry back. We'll wait supper for you."

"I'll take Duke; he's the fastest horse on the place," said Jack, as he hurried from the room.

They had been having such a cosey time of it, just this group of young people, that Marianne quite forgot that there were probably other members of the family; and she was rather taken aback when two men strode into the kitchen, where the three girls were busy over the preparations for supper. "This is Royal Reyburn's sister Marianne, father. Grandfather, you haven't met Miss Reyburn," were the words with which Kate presented her; and Marianne was suddenly conscious that here was the grandfather whom she had called a Tory, and whose actions she had discussed with Sue. He was rather a fierce-looking old fellow, she thought, and she felt that she would rather not bring up the subject of politics before him. She hoped he would not introduce the subject, and was half sorry that she had consented to remain. Kate's father she liked better, and saw at once how Jack had become possessed of his good nature and his love of teasing; for when Grandfather Silverthorn left the room, his son began lazily to ask the girls if they had sent Jack for the doctor, that he had ridden off in such hot haste.

"No," Sue explained; "he went to tell them at Madame Desvouges's that Marianne would stay with us all night."

"He was in the mischief of a hurry to get there," said Mr. Silverthorn, with a quizzical look at Marianne.

"He wanted to get back to supper," put in Kate. "We are going to have pumpkin cake, and no doubt he is afraid he will not get his share if he does not hurry."

Mr. Silverthorn laughed. "Judging by the way he was riding, I should say that he thought there was some other sweet thing for him to hurry back for."

Marianne caught his teasing look, and blushed scarlet. Kate shook her head at him, and went on to say, "You are quite right, father; we are going to have some honey."

"Come here, honey," said Mr. Silverthorn, turning to Marianne. And then she could but join in the laugh that followed, while half angry, half pleased, she dropped him a curtsey, and stood smiling down at him as he lounged on the big settle by the fire.

"You're not a bit like your brother," he said.

"No," returned Marianne, "I am like my father."

"And he is about five feet one or two in his stockings?" Mr. Silverthorn asked quizzically.

"No, he is six feet two; but except for height I am exactly like him, only my skin is not so fair."

"Must be a pretty good-looking man," Mr. Silverthorn added. "I'll be switched, if there isn't Jack back again. That horse must be in a perfect lather. I'll have to go out and look to it that Jack gives him a good rubbing down. See here, Miss Marianne, if you send my boy off on many such trips, I'll have to fix him up a flying machine, or else he'll ruin my horses." And the man went out, leaving his daughters laughing at Marianne's confusion.

"You mustn't mind father," they told her. "He jokes with everybody and has always been the greatest tease; but he is the dearest father in the world, and ever since our mother died he has been father and mother both to us. Grandfather can be pretty sharp sometimes, but father never is."

Royal had gone out to help with the evening's chores in Jack's absence, and presently all came in together, ready for the pumpkin cake, which, done to a turn in the bake-kettle, was set smoking hot upon the table.

Kate's quickness of wit saved Marianne any wounded feelings, for, though the subject of the war was begun, she turned it into a channel of reminiscence, and Marianne found herself deeply interested in those tales of hardship which the refugees had to tell. She looked with renewed interest at the tall old clock, the weather-beaten chairs, and the other carefully preserved pieces of furniture, relics of a former luxury, and it gave her

a new respect for these people, to learn how cheerfully they had accepted privation and discomfort for conscience' sake.

"Yes," said Mr. Silverthorn, as he rose from the table, "the only gown my wife had when we were married was of deerskin; that was her wedding-dress, and she came near not having that."

"Why?" Marianne asked, much interested.

"She took it off to wash it for the great occasion. Deerskin lasts pretty well, but it does get greasy, so Kitty thought she'd be specially particular and use lye for it, soap being scarce, but, bless my soul! it shrank away to nothing, and she hadn't anything to wear but a blanket till all the women folks around got together and helped her get a new deerskin ready for her wedding. It looked for a time as if we'd have to put off getting married, but they got her rigged up finely, after all; at any rate I thought so. I wasn't thinking of what she had on; it was the girl herself that was in my mind." He gave a sigh, and Kate said softly: "And mother often told us it was the happiest day of her life. She often used to tell us that story, to show us that fine clothes aren't necessary for happiness."

Marianne glanced down at the blue dress she wore and smiled.

"That is the one bit of finery we possess," Kate told

her. "It belonged to our grandmother, and we made it over a few years ago for Sue; but now she has outgrown it, yet it is full long for you. Doesn't Marianne look well in it, grandfather?"

The old man turned his sharp eyes upon Marianne, who wondered how he would like the idea of her parading around in his wife's one fine gown, if he had known her dislike of Tories; but he made no comment, only nodded assent and walked from the room.

Very amicably did the grandchildren of Tory and Whig spend their evening, and Marianne went to bed feeling as if she must love these new friends, whatever side their ancestors had fought upon; and she parted from them the next morning with promise to see them soon again. Royal and Jack escorted her back to her grandmother's house, which she reached none the worse for her adventure.

It was when she came again into her father's presence and saw him still pale and weak from his wounds, that she fully appreciated the fact that she must make another effort to start the ball rolling which would urge on the plan she had made for his escape. If he had belonged to the militia instead of to the regular troops, he would simply be paroled and returned home, as were the other militiamen, and the matter would be very simply adjusted; but to think of his being sent to Quebec to wait for exchange, was not to be thought of.

She gave a full account of her visit to the Silver-thorns, and her father listened gravely, shaking his head when she told him of her adventure in the woods. "It was fortunate that it was no one but a good-hearted lad that you met. I do not want my little girl to be running wild in the woods and about the country when hordes of soldiers are gathering; and if the Indians are on the war-path and learn that you are the daughter of an American, what can you expect. No, no, my child; let matters take their course."

This Marianne was determined not to do, though she said no more at the time, but went to Victorine to relate her adventures. She received a scolding for running off alone, and Victorine made minute inquiries about her entertainers, at first a little disposed to discourage the acquaintance. "What are they like, these girls?" she asked.

Marianne described them in glowing terms.

"I have heard Royal speak of them, but I did not know they were such intimate friends," she said musingly. "I think it is the one you call Kate that he likes best."

"Oh, I don't know. What makes you think so? When have you seen them?"

"I have not seen them," said Victorine, "but," with a wistful little smile, "the last time he mentioned them

he called her *she*, and when he spoke of her sister he called her by her name."

Marianne pondered over this for a moment. "Anyhow," she said, "he didn't talk to one more than the other. He likes Jack—I mean the brother; and it is convenient and pleasant for him to have a place like that to go to."

"Instead of coming here."

"He doesn't come here, because he thinks it would distress father to see him."

"Perhaps. You haven't told me yet why it was that you went off in that naughty way."

"I am not going to tell. I said I meant to run away. Don't you remember? And one may have secrets."

"Oh, yes, one may."

"You have yours?"

"Yes, I have mine." Victorine spoke with a little sigh.

"Vic, dear," Marianne leaned over and kissed her, "I would tell you if I could, but I can't now. Perhaps—yes, I am sure I will some day, and then you will tell me, too."

Victorine drew a needle from the stocking she was knitting and began the next row before she answered. "I cannot promise."

"Well, then, we will leave it." And she spoke no

more of her secret, though it was on her mind night and day how she could carry out her schemes for her father's deliverance. The river was guarded by pickets; there were encampments on both sides, batteries above and below; desertions were frequent, and those in sympathy with the Americans listened anxiously to the reports of disease and disaffection in the camps.

CHAPTER VI

Scheming

NEARLY every day Royal and Jack made their appearance at the house of Madame Desvouges, but it was a rare chance that gave them a sight of Marianne. She was more disposed to become good friends with Sue and Kate than with their brother, for while the exchange of visits between the girls was frequent, Marianne took care that her visits were made when Jack was not at home.

Her father was now nearly well, and the question of his being transferred to some other point became one that must be settled very soon. Only out of consideration to Royal and by the influence of his friends had his case been left unsettled.

"If they take him away," Marianne made her plaint to Victor, "they will perhaps send him to some of those dreadful places we hear about; and even if he were allowed a parole, he would not be able to fight."

"Perhaps he will soon be exchanged," Victor tried to comfort her by saying. "That would not be a bad fate at all. It has been very pleasant, I am sure,

for the family to be all here together, even if your father and brother do not meet."

Marianne turned away impatiently. "You don't understand what it means to father and me not to be actively at work for our own country. You have no special country, and what do you care which side wins? There is no use asking your help in the matter; that is plain to see."

"I have a country, and I am loyal to it," Victor returned.

"No, no, you are not, for this is not a struggle between French and English, and you are French. Don't talk to me about your being loyal, I don't want to hear it."

Victor was discomfited; he realized that he was not making much headway in Marianne's good graces.

"I'd help any way that I could, but I don't see what can be done," he said helplessly. "If you would only tell me."

"If you can't see of your own accord, there is no use trying to make you," returned Marianne, impatiently.

"You know I'd do anything in the world to please you."

"Then use your wits and find me a way to get back home with my father," she said, as she walked away.

Victor felt that he was between two fires. His desire to please Marianne, and his desire to keep her where she was, conflicted. She would never cease to reproach him if he did not make some effort to liberate her father, and yet he was a British prisoner whose own son was his captor. If Royal could not find a means to get him decently exchanged, how could he be expected to do it? Victor was faithful, but he was not brilliant, though inadvertently he did play into Marianne's hands.

He came to the girl with an air of mystery one day. "There is some one out in the barn who wants to speak to you," he said. He looked cautiously around as he made the announcement.

Madame Desvouges and Victorine were busy in one corner of the kitchen; Marianne in the other was at work paring apples. She looked up quickly. "Very well," she replied. "I will come directly I have finished these, that is— Who is it, Victor?"

"The old pedler. He says he has something to tell you about the bracelet."

Marianne nodded. "I will come as soon as I have pared these apples."

Victor sat down beside her. "I will help you."

Madame Desvouges from the other side of the room watched them with a pleased look. "They grow confidential, those two," she whispered to Victorine. "It

is an ill wind that blows no one good ; and when two young people are thrown together day after day—well, one knows what is likely to be the result. We have never been able before to keep Marianne with us for so long a time."

"Why is Asa Peaslee so secret in his coming ? Why didn't he come to the house ?" Marianne asked in a low tone.

"That I cannot say, but he seemed desirous of not being seen."

"I wonder how in the world he happened to know I was here."

"He did not know till he asked me of your whereabouts. He knew I lived here, it seems."

"They do not wish to be heard," said grandmamma, significantly. "We will not try to overhear them, will we, Victorine ?" She laughed a little pleased chuckle. "Start the loom and let them talk."

But presently Marianne brought the apples over to the table. "They are all ready, grandmamma. I am going to the barn to hunt eggs. With the army so near it is hard to keep supplied, and we have not an egg left in the basket."

"Go, then," said her grandmother. She watched the two depart, and her satisfied air was very obvious to Marianne ; it half annoyed her. Grand'mère was too ready to thrust Victor upon her, she was beginning

to see, and it would have been better for his cause if there had been less eagerness on the part of the good lady.

Once out of the house, Marianne ran ahead to the barn, where, sitting on a pile of hay, she found Asa Peaslee. "Go, you, and hunt the eggs, and don't come back till I call you," she ordered Victor. "I want to talk to our friend here. How are you, Mr. Peaslee?"

"Wal, I'm 'bout as usual; pretty smart in body, though I must say I'm considerable upset in mind."

"Why is that?"

"Oh, these blamed fools o' gin'rals make me sick. That pompous old Smyth is the biggest idiot that I ever did see. He's all gab; and if he 'mounts to a row of pins, I'm mistaken. But there! I didn't come over here to talk about him. It's a wonder I got acrost at all, but I did. They know me, and I jest snuck over above here. Found an Injun that showed me a way."

"Oh, how did you come? Do tell me," Marianne broke in eagerly.

Asa nodded his head with a sly wink. "I wa'n't born yist'day. You don't ketch me. What I come to this here place is to see if you'd got that there bit of a bracelet yit. Ain't lost it, hev ye?"

"No, I have it safe enough; but why do you want to know?"

"'Cause that there old Injun squaw's been pesterin' the life out o' me to git it back for her; says it's a sort o'—what d'ye call it?—amulet or somethin', and she's had bad luck ever sence she parted with it; wants to git it back at any cost."

"Oh, and you think you'll make a good bargain with her; I see."

"Now, ain't you a suspicious young miss? Jest you wait a bit. I don't calc'late to make nawthin' off the old soul. Lord! she's wore out the calico I give her for it long ago; but, wal, her and her son's been pretty good to me, and I'd ought to show 'em some 'preciation of it. Now, jest let's us come to business. What'll you take for it?"

Marianne considered the matter. "I don't know. I am not sure that I want to part with it. I shall have to think about it."

"Mebbe I've got suthin' along with me that you'd like better. I ain't over here peddlin', to be sure, but then I dunno's I couldn't git ye what ye want, and send it to ye when I git back."

"You are goin' back? When? How?"

"That's neither here nor there. There's more ways of killin' a dog than by chokin' him with soft butter. I'm a-goin', and, as the Bible says, an' that right airly."

Marianne leaned forward and looked at him steadfastly. The shrewd gray eyes met hers honestly,

and the humorous mouth gave her a twisted smile.
“I’m a purty crittur, ain’t I ?” he said with a chuckle.
“Look as long as ye want. I ain’t the blushin’ kind.”

Marianne laughed. Then she said in a low voice :
“I thought you were a true, loyal American.”

He looked around cautiously, put both hands on his knees, leaned forward, and whispered back, “So I am. Ain’t you ?”

“To my heart’s core.”

“That’s what I thought.”

“My father was wounded in the attack on Queenston.”

“So I heerd tell.”

“He is a prisoner there in my grandmother’s house.”

Asa nodded.

Marianne leaned still closer and whispered still lower, “Are you a spy ?”

Asa drew down his face. “Don’t like the eepithet. You’re true blue? I kin trust ye?”

“To the utmost.”

“Wal, then, I’m here for my country’s intrus’. I guess I’ve found out what I come for, and I’m goin’ back with what no man kin find on my pusson. Good reason why — ’tain’t there; it’s all in this timepiece.” And he tapped his head.

Marianne sat with her chin in her hands, her thoughts busy.

"What about that bracelet?" Asa asked, breaking the silence.

"I will let you have it upon one condition. I think the good God has sent you to help us. If you will help me to invent a plan for my father's escape, you shall have the bracelet. I know you are a shrewd man, and the Yankees, they tell me, are very inventive; so, now, here is a chance to exercise your wits."

"Blamed if I don't do it." He thought a moment, then struck his knee hard. "You've hit it; the bracelet will do the business. That's a happy thought. The old squaw can help us out."

Marianne clapped her hands. "To be sure, and that will carry out my first plan. Let me tell you about it. I started out one day, thinking I would go to the Indian village and see if I could get some paint and things to disguise my father, and then I thought he could at least escape from the house undetected. I thought we would dress up like Indians, he and I, and escape to the woods and hide there, and maybe we could avoid the pickets and get across the river in some way. I was going to offer the bracelet to the Indians; for father told me it was not a common thing, and that it might be of use some day. I hadn't quite settled it all, for I fell

into a bog, and since then they have not let me go off by myself."

Asa regarded her admiringly. "You've got a head-piece, and I guess two heads is better than one, if one is a pumpkin head. You've got the right idear, and we'll work on that, and see how's the best way to carry it out."

"It must be soon, for my brother is responsible for my father. He is his prisoner."

Asa stared. "What ye talking about? Yer brother?"

"Yes, my brother is on the enemy's side. He belongs to the militia; and it was he who found my father wounded, and rescued him from the Indians. I should hate to have any trouble come to Royal, but father must be helped away. Do you suppose they would think Royal had contrived his father's escape? He has given his word that he will deliver him up when it is required of him, and my grandmother, too, promised that he should be guarded as any other prisoner. It was only on that account that they were allowed to take him to her house."

"We'll have to see into that. You're like that old fellow we used to read about when I was a little chap: avoidin' Scyll he fell onto Charybdus." He leaned back against his pile of hay, and meditatively pulled his beard, much the color of the hay itself. Presently he began to chuckle to himself. "That

would be a joke," he said, "a big joke." He wagged his head in enjoyment of the thought. "Brother's in militia?"

"Yes."

"'Spose they ever give him picket dooty?"

"I suppose so. Yes, I am sure of it."

"Wal, if fortune favors us, and we happen on a dark night, we might be able to kill two birds with one stone. I'd like nawthin' better. Jeehosophat! but that would be fun. Now, sissy, you keep quiet, and to-morrer I'll come along 'bout this time. Meanwhile, I'll see the old Injun woman, and mebbe we kin git this straightened out. She done me a good turn oncet upon a time,—cured me up with her yarbs,—and I happened to be able to do her son a favor, so we keep on tryin' to git quits; and this time she thinks she's in my debt, and if I promise that bracelet, I guess that will clinch matters."

Marianne arose to her feet. "Then I will trust it all to you."

"Ye kin."

"I know I can." She held out her hand, and the old man took it gingerly, but did not fail to give it a squeeze before he dropped it.

"Call yer young man, and I'll git out," he said.

Victor obediently appeared at Marianne's summons. He had been patiently sitting up in the loft with his

hat full of eggs. "You did find some; that's good," said Marianne, in a satisfied tone. "You may bring them in for me, and don't, for your life, let any one know that we did not hunt them together; and keep it a dead secret about Asa Peaslee."

"What about the bracelet?"

"Oh, the old squaw wanted to get it back again, that was all."

"Did you let him have it?"

"No, Asa is going to see what she will give for it, and will let me know to-morrow."

All the next day Marianne was excited and watchful. As evening approached, she waited her chance to make an excuse to absent herself from the house. Victor, her usual willing cat's-paw, was busy in the garden. She would fain have offered to go and help him, but she had never been too ready with such offers, and she would best not do anything to arouse suspicion. She knew that Roy and Jack might appear that day, and she had set Victor upon the watch for them. There were no eggs needed? Yes, there should be. She would see to it that there were; and before the afternoon was over, there was a crash in the pantry, an exclamation of dismay, and Marianne appeared at the door, crying out: "Oh, grandmamma, I have overturned the egg basket in trying to reach the top shelf, and alas! I have broken

every egg. Was ever such an unfortunate? It is all due to my being such a mite. If I had been taller, I would not have had to stand upon that treacherous stool. What shall I do? I will clear up the mess at once; but there will be no eggs for supper, and you had promised my father one of your own best omelets. Is it not unfortunate?"

She seemed so genuinely distressed that her grandmother tried to comfort her. "Never mind, my child. Of course, one is sorry for such a waste, but there are others to be found, I have no doubt, and your only punishment shall be that you go and hunt for them."

"That I will do gladly," replied Marianne, brightening up.

"I will help you," Victorine volunteered.

"Oh, I can never allow that," Marianne hastened to say. "You are too good, Victorine. I ought to do it all by myself for having been so naughty and careless. If I allow any one to help me, it shall be Victor, for it is partly his fault; he should have made a better stool."

"True enough," put in Madame Desvouges, well pleased. "You have a cold, Victorine; I would not go out in this keen air."

So Marianne made her escape unsuspected and found Asa waiting for her, as before. "Wal, you don't

keep a feller long coolin' his heels," was his greeting, "and it's well you don't, for we've got to make hay while the sun shines. Ye see, grandma and brother and them mustn't know, or else it may be wuss for 'em. Me an' them Injuns hev concocted a plan. Old squaw wont leave a stone unturned to git back that jig-a-me-rig armlet, so says I, 'Ef you help me to git a man back to his hairth and hum, the bracelet you shell have, as sure as my name's Asy Peaslee.' An' I says to Fire-Eyes,—that's the old woman's son, 'We'll call it quits if you git us all over safe.' So here's the scheme: About dark this evening you and pop steals out of the house and meets me here. I've got stuff to rig you up Injun shape, and we'll go along, striking into the woods unmolested. Pop kin walk a bit, I s'pose. Ain't too weak?"

"No, I think not. He grows stronger all the time, but has pretended weakness that he might still remain here, and does not venture beyond the gate. He has orders to keep within bounds. We think it is intended that he shall be sent to Quebec or elsewhere with the next company of prisoners sent."

"Pray God there'll be no next ones," remarked Asa, fervently. "Wal, then, we're all right if we don't git nabbed. Pop kin talk Injun, I guess. I see some of them red 'cattle comin' in here yist'day."

"Yes, they come with various things to sell."

"That's good. We'll pretend we have various things to sell if we meet up with any Britishers. Now all you've got to do is to make your chance to git out here, and leave the rest to me. We'll flank them pickets and git acrost, for it's goin' to be a dark night, no moon and cloudy. Now run in, or they'll suspicion ye."

"I've got to hunt for eggs; that is my excuse."

"I'll help ye. I guess nob'dy is better at findin' things than Asy Peaslee." He was as good as his word, and was not many minutes in finding a nest of eggs, which he made over to Marianne, who ran quickly to the house with them.

It required some contriving to arrange it so that her father could leave the house unobserved. First Marianne must find a chance to give him a whispered account of her interview with Asa. Then Mr. Reyburn declared that he must not leave his wife, and Marianne was in a quandary. "I don't want to leave mother, either," she said. "But, father, if you are carried off and should be sent to England to prison, you would have to leave her, and in much worse manner. We will find a way for her to come to us; and if she knew, she would feel that her mother ought to be told, so you see—you know how it would be."

Her father nodded. "I see, but it seems a

cowardly thing to leave women behind to bear the brunt of my escape."

"You would do worse to bear the brunt of your being carried off. This is much less dreadful. Do, dearest father, consent. The time is short, and mother will be so glad to know that you are safe at home. She would stand by you, of course, if she knew, but she is excitable, and could not keep it to herself. Every one would know that something unusual was on hand."

At last Mr. Reyburn was won over, and consented to announce that he would take a nap, and being left alone would climb out the window, his room being on the ground floor, and would meet Marianne in the barn. To Marianne's relief all went well so far, and if Mrs. Reyburn wondered why her husband and daughter were so unusually affectionate to her when she left the latter to cover up her father for his proposed nap, she ceased to wonder when she found the note which announced their flight. Yet, good woman that she was, she did not tell her secret that night, and rejoiced rather than regretted their going, being anxious only that they should reach their destination in safety.

CHAPTER VII

An Exchange of Prisoners

IT was dark when two figures clad in Indian garb stole out of Madame Desvouges's barn, and under cover of the shadows of evening were able to get to the woods without discovery. Asa Peaslee, startlingly arrayed in the red coat of a British soldier, met them. "We were so afraid Victor or some one would come into the barn while we were getting ready," said Marianne, in a hysterical whisper. "We were going to hide in the hay if we heard any one, but as good luck had it, not a soul saw us except the old white horse. Do you think we shall get through all right?"

"As long as we are out of the way of the patrol, we needn't fear," Asa told her. "We've got some weapons hid up here in the hollow, and we'd ought to be able to defend ourselves against more than one man. If any one must bite the dust, it will have to be the Britisher."

They followed along, one after the other, Indian fashion, through the dark woods, Asa leading the

way. It seemed a grawsome journey to Marianne, used, though she was, to forest ways. When they had reached a certain hollow tree, Asa stopped and drew from it a rifle, which he handed to Mr. Reyburn. Then he gave Marianne a pistol, saying, "I guess you know how to use that when occasion requires."

The girl in her deerskins, looking like a funny little Indian lad, stuck the pistol in her belt and replied: "I don't believe I shall need any one to show me how to aim straight, but I am not sure whether my courage will hold out, if it is light enough to see the thing at which I must shoot."

"I guess when it comes to a question of self-defence, you'll be all right," Asa remarked, — an answer which did not add to Marianne's peace of mind.

After keeping to the road for some time they struck into the road leading to St. David's, and finally made the branch road, which would take them to the Heights. At the angle of these roads stood the remnant of the Hamilton house, battered by the American guns on the day of the battle of Queenston. "There is a battery not far off," said Asa, under his breath; "we must fight shy of that, and get down the cliffs as best we can. You can manage it, I hope, sir."

"I managed to climb up, and I've no doubt I can climb down again," replied Mr. Reyburn, grimly;

and the scramble down the steep cliffs began,—an almost perpendicular climb, rendered possible only by the presence of the trees and bushes which held fast to the crannies of the rocks. Yet a dangerous way it was, for a misstep might hurl one into the rapidly flowing river beneath. They were about halfway down, when from the dimness came a voice: "Halt! Who goes there?" The snapping of the branches had betrayed them.

"A friend," replied Asa. "Go on," he called as loudly as he dared to his companions. "We're all right."

"Advance friend, and give the countersign," said the voice they had heard.

"It's easy enough to say advance," said Asa, "but when a fellow has lost his way in the dark, advancin' ain't so easy, but I'll give the countersign all right, if you'll trust to the advancin' bein' down hill."

There came a chuckle from the dimness. "Go ahead, I'll take the countersign," returned the voice, and Asa proceeded to give it. He stood still for a moment after, and muttered to himself, "I'd like plaguey well to know if that fellow's above or below."

The voice of the patrol continued, "Just follow this light and you'll be all right." A bit of a flame flashed out, and Asa, by its light saw that by their circuitous route they had come very near to the

battery. He proceeded to scramble down the rocks as fast as possible. "Hold there!" cried the patrol. "You're going the wrong way." Another flash showed him Asa's red coat; and, seeing that the man had no idea of advancing in his direction, the patrol called again, "Halt there, will you!"

"Halt yourself!" shouted back Asa.

"You're trying to desert!" shouted the patrol, and his rifle rang out upon the air, the bullet passing close to Asa's head. The pedler dodged behind a tree, and gave an answering shot. There was the sound of a falling body which came crashing through the bushes, rolling past the pedler, and on down the cliff. Then there came a startled scream from below, and in a moment Asa had scrambled down almost to the river, to find upon a small abutment, Mr. Reyburn and Marianne, the latter clinging to her father. Just above in the bushes lay the body of the man who had rolled down the cliff, and who was stopped from going farther by a thick clump of undergrowth.

"You've struck the exact spot," announced Asa. He gave a low whistle, followed by a peculiar call, and over the edge of the jutting rock came the head of the Indian, Fire-Eyes. He actively scrambled upon the place where the others were standing, and waited orders.

A slight groan came from the man in the bushes. "Oh," cried Marianne, "he is alive. Don't leave him here to die."

"We'll take him, too," returned Asa; "the more the merrier. This isn't bad; two prisoners for our side. You've got the other fellow?" he asked the Indian.

Fire-Eyes signified that he had, and then Marianne was lifted down into the boat, rocking on the river. She was grasped by the sinewy arms of the Indian squaw. Next came Mr. Reyburn, and then the wounded man; last of all, Asa and the Indian.

"We've one more passenger than we bargained for," said Asa, "but I guess we'll get over all right."

Marianne perceived that there was with them a man gagged and bound; she wondered how he happened to be there. To this man Asa presently addressed himself: "Soon's we git over, young man, we'll take that bandage off your mouth. I dunno's there's anything I'd hate wuss'n hevin' to keep my mouth shet," he added, chuckling softly.

The muffled oars made no sound, and at last they were safely landed, the willing and the unwilling prisoners.

Marianne, half bewildered, stumbled along in the darkness. Once during the silent walk the old squaw laid hold of the girl's wrist, and gave a grunt of satisfaction as she felt the presence of the bracelet.

Marianne loosened the trinket and handed it to her. She received it without a word, and stowed it away in her bosom. Fire-Eyes and the little pedler bore the body of the wounded man, and Mr. Reyburn kept a close grasp upon the shoulder of the other prisoner. Asa had removed his coat and tossed it back into the boat, saying: "If we come across any of our Yankee brethren, they shan't take me for a blamed Britisher. I'm about as ready to keep out of the way of my own countrymen as I was out of the enemy's. What you want to do, Mr. Reyburn, is to make tracks for home as quick as you kin. We want to git this man somewhere and the gal, too. You know the way better'n I do; s'pose you lead. Keep a tight holt on your man. You kin trot him into camp in the morning if you want to, but we ain't goin' to let him give us the slip to-night if we kin help it" The warning was needed, for more than once the prisoner tried to wrench himself from the grasp of his warder; and seeing this, the old squaw lent her strength to the holding of the fellow.

It was a tedious and exhausting journey which at last brought them into the road leading to the Reyburn farm. They had encountered no patrol on this side, though the camp-fires gleamed along the foot of the cliffs. The Indian's sharp eyes had been on the look-out before they landed, and he had discovered the

form of a picket to the right of them. The boat was then directed a little farther up-stream, and being favored by the darkness, they were able to get under shadow of some bushes before the man on picket duty could come that way again.

"The dark's a good friend when you want to keep out of sight," said Asa, "but I'm blest if I wouldn't like a little more light to travel home by; I'd like to borry a camp-fire for a while."

Long and wearisome as the journey was, they came to the end of it at last, and Marianne was glad enough to see the familiar landmarks, and to hear the barking of old Towser, who came bounding out to meet them, and after sniffing around, yelped with joy, and jumped against one and another, nearly knocking Marianne down in his delight. His barking and yelping brought some one to the window. "Shut up there, Towser! Who's there?" came from a door hastily opened.

"Let us in, Jerusha," replied Mr. Reyburn. The man under his grasp made a quick movement.

"No, you don't, my fine sir," Asa exclaimed. "We've got you this far with some trouble to ourselves, and we'll keep you now."

"It is I, Walter Reyburn," said Mr. Reyburn in answer to the query from the doorway. "I have some friends with me; you needn't be afraid to let us all in."

There was an ejaculation of surprise, but the door opened wider, and a lank figure with a candle peered out. "Bless my soul!" exclaimed Jerusha, "you could have knocked me down with a feather when I heard your voice, Mr. Reyburn. Which are you?" She peered around at the various faces, holding the candle so it would fall on each in turn.

"I'm here, all right," replied Mr. Reyburn, grimly, "though I'm not surprised that you don't recognize me in this rig. I'm a big Injun, Jerusha," and he laughed. It was good to feel himself at liberty again.

To his laugh Jerusha responded by a dry cackle. "That's proof positive, Mr. Reyburn. Come right in, sir." She held the door wide open, and they passed through, Asa and the Indian, Fire-Eyes, depositing their burden on the floor.

"Not there," exclaimed Marianne, "put him on the settle."

Jerusha stared at the little figure in deerskins. "Why, land sakes! if that ain't Mary Anne. Why, I want to know!"

"Yes, it is I, you dear old Jerusha." She hugged the lank figure, in her joy at seeing her again. "Here, Jerusha," she said, as soon as she had finished her embrace, "help me to get our man here safely looked after. I do not know how badly he is hurt."

"You go 'long," said Jerusha. "I'll attend to him. I guess I'm capable of it."

Meantime Mr. Reyburn and the others were busy in securing the other prisoner. "We'll take off this bandage, and make him comfortable," said Asa. He lifted the man's fur cap from his head, and untied the handkerchief which covered his mouth. As the dim light of the candle disclosed his features, Marianne gave a cry of surprise, "Father! Father! It is Royal!"

"Wal, I'll be switched!" exclaimed Asa; "if that ain't what you might call a coincidence, I'm a sinner. 'Tain't your brother?"

"It is, it is!" Marianne's arms were around him. "Oh, you poor Royal, you've been bandaged up all this time and couldn't speak a word. If we had only known who it was, do you suppose I would have allowed you to come this distance without saying a word to me? Did you know us?"

"Not for some time," he replied doggedly.

"Mary Anne," came Jerusha's sharp voice. "This here man's in want of more attention than your brother. I want you should go and get me some bandages. There's some in the chist in the upper room."

"Is he badly hurt?" asked Marianne, as she took up the candle to light her way.

"He's not so terrible hurt, as near as I kin make out; but he's been bleedin' pretty freely, and he's faint. I'd like a little spirits for him, Mr. Reyburn. Never mind, Mary Anne can get me some."

Marianne went off to obey directions. Meantime father and son faced each other. "If I had known it was you, sir," said Mr. Reyburn, "I am not so sure that I could have held you with a pistol in my other hand, ready to blow your brains out if you got the best of me."

Royal made no reply, only stood with head thrown back and defiance written on his face. His father turned on his heel. "We must keep a watch over him," he said. "Where is Mark?"

"It is Royal Reyburn, your son, sir," said Jerusha, turning from the man to whom she was ministering.

"I know it," was the answer, "but he is none the less a prisoner, captured in the service of the enemy."

By this time Marianne had returned with the bottle of spirits and some bandages. She was at no loss to find things in this her own home. She leaned over the man lying white and still on the settle, and seeing him for the first time she gave a little smothered cry, then she cried, "Oh, father, Royal, it is Jack,—poor Jack Silverthorn! What a strange, strange fatality! My brother and his best friend our prisoners. Yet I am glad, glad that we are the ones to take them."

"Who is the man?" asked her father, coming up.

"It is Jack Silverthorn."

"A friend of yours?"

"Yes,—I mean, no. He is a friend of mine, and yet he is an enemy. I know his sisters, and I am very fond of them; so for their sakes I am glad their brother has fallen into our hands,—though, to be sure," she added, "he wouldn't have been hurt but for us."

"The man shall be made as comfortable as possible," returned her father. "Jerusha will not let him suffer for want of nursing. But Marianne, my child, you must go to bed. You can leave the patient and the rest of us to Jerusha's good graces."

"You must go to bed, too," said the girl, tenderly. "I do not see how you have held out so bravely when you are not as strong as you ought to be. You will remain here with us," she continued, turning to Asa and the two Indians.

"I guess I know when I'm well off," Asa replied; "but these two friends of mine say they must go back to-night. I'm well content to stay where I am."

"Won't you stay?" Marianne asked the Indians.
"You will be very welcome."

But they thought it safer to return, as they had come, in the darkness, although Mr. Reyburn added his invitation to Marianne's. They responded gravely to all expressions of gratitude, assuring the family of their

friendship and promising to remember that the hospitality of the house was open to them.

"We are quits, though," Asa told Fire-Eyes. "I don't forget that." But the old squaw shook her head, and produced the bracelet as a token that she felt there was still an obligation on her side. At last, after many ceremonious speeches and an exchange of grave farewells, the two Indians glided out into the night, leaving the others safe in-doors.

It was strange, indeed, to Marianne to sleep under her own roof again, brought thither through such peculiar circumstances. What a twist of fortune's wheel, that had made her brother her father's prisoner, after the latter had been in the hands of the enemy and had escaped. She was not quite sure of Asa's part in the capture of her brother, and determined to ask him about it. She did this later, but received no satisfaction, though if the truth had been known, it was he who planned that Royal should be taken by Fire-Eyes as the lad was returning from a visit from the Silver-thorn's. He thought it a huge joke, did Asa, but he would not tell Marianne of it. After her thoughts had dwelt upon Royal for a while, Marianne began thinking of Jack. She wondered if he suffered much. Would he be very angry with them all when he learned how he had been fired upon in the discharge of his duty? She was very sorry for his sisters, who would be dis-

tressed over his condition. She cared more for their feelings than for his, for they were innocent, and he had been an enemy. She would like to get word to Kate and Sue. Perhaps Asa would help her do that, and send a message to her mother, too. The tears came to her eyes as she thought of her mother. She wondered if she were lying wide awake, worrying over her beloved ones. Excited as Marianne was, she was so weary in mind and body that she soon fell asleep, the thought of her mother her last conscious one.

CHAPTER VIII

Friend or Enemy

WHEN she awoke the next morning and saw her familiar surroundings, for a moment Marianne forgot that she had been from home all these weeks; but gradually the events of the night before came back clearly, and she sprang out of bed, remembering that Jerusha would need her help. She found this maid of all work had already a good fire started, and was stirring around, making breakfast ready. "What can I do, Jerusha?" Marianne asked.

"You can go and see if the men folks are getting up; and if they are, you might ask that little whiffet of a pedler how the wounded boy is, and if he can eat any breakfast. I ain't had time to see to him this morning, and I don't know as I need to. They was all quiet when I got up. I listened at the door, and I didn't hear nothin' but a snore."

"Where is father?"

"Land! he was up and off before daybreak! He ain't going to let grass grow under his feet when it comes to getting back to camp. He said last night that he wouldn't be back to breakfast."

Leaving Jerusha vigorously stirring up a johnny-cake, Marianne went to the door of the room where the three men were, and timidly knocked. The door was opened by Asa, who was keeping cheerful watch over the two prisoners. On the bed lay Jack, laughing, actually laughing, at some of Asa's witticisms. Marianne stood still in the doorway, surprised at this levity on the part of the wounded prisoner.

"Come in," called Jack, cheerfully. "Isn't this a huge joke? Peaslee has been telling me about it."

"I don't see the joke," said Royal, looking grum.

"Roy has no sense of humor," Jack went on. "For my part, I think it is the funniest thing I've heard for many a long day. You must have been surprised when you got here and saw who your prisoners were."

"It was owing to the dark that we didn't know sooner," Marianne replied. "I don't see now why we didn't recognize Royal; but he had no chance to speak, and I was so scared, and altogether we didn't seem to have our wits about us. Are you much hurt?" She felt a little more kindly disposed toward this young man, now he was helpless.

"No, not so much," Jack made reply. "I was stunned by the bullet, and I got a rough tumbling rolling down hill; but, beyond a few bruises and a sprained ankle, I'm not so badly off. Asa says your

father has gone to see if we can be set free on parole."

"Oh, then will you stay here?" She turned to Royal.

"Not necessarily," he replied. "I, for one, am not willing to promise not to take up arms again."

"Nonsense!" broke in Jack. "I am willing enough to do it; and, moreover, I don't object to staying where I am. I should think you'd be glad enough of your luck, Roy, when here's your home, and you've a good excuse for not fighting against your people. You've shown your colors, and that's all that is necessary for you to do. So far as that goes, if it hadn't been for grandfather's being so set upon my joining the army, I don't believe I should have done it; at least, not till things were a little more lively. I suppose you think I would have been perfectly right if I had remained a neutral, Miss Marianne."

"I don't like half-hearted people," she replied coldly. Then she added: "I came up to see if you could eat any breakfast."

"I? Oh, yes. Can't I?" He turned to Asa.

"I'd be a little keerful," returned the pedler. "A bit of porridge, maybe, with a little milk."

"Porridge!" Jack made a wry face. "I'm not a baby."

"You've a bit of fever," Asa warned him.



"This . . . is the young lady of whom you were telling me"



"Jerusha will fix you up something, if there's anything to be had," Marianne promised him. She felt her responsibility with a sick man in the house. So she hustled about, and hunted here and there till she was able to provide a couple of poached eggs for Jack; and Jerusha had made ready quite an abundant meal for the others, for Mark had started out early, and had brought in some game to supply the larder. It was well he did, and that Jerusha was capable of exhibiting her merits as a cook, for Mr. Reyburn came in just before the meal was ready, and with him was no less a person than the colonel of his regiment. He was quite a young man, but tall and distinguished looking, and he met the little frontier maid with all the courtesy in the world. "So this," he said, "is the young lady of whom you were telling me, and to whom the success of your escape is due."

"Oh, no," returned the blushing Marianne, "not to me, for it was Asa Peaslee and his Indian friends who carried out the plan."

"But it was your plan, to begin with," insisted the colonel. "Now about these prisoners of yours, Miss Reyburn; since they are young, and don't know any better, I think we shall have to release them on parole. I have consulted the general, and that is his opinion. Will that suit you?"

"Indeed, yes."

"You are specially interested in them, of course."

"In my brother, of course, sir; and as the other is the brother of some very good friends of mine, I should like to see him receive the same generous treatment."

"Only because he is the brother of your friends?" said the colonel, quizzically.

Marianne drew herself up to the full extent of her height. "That is the only reason. Do you suppose I could have any other with regard to one who is my country's enemy?"

The colonel laughed, and asked to see this terrible foe. Jack, with his boyish face and his bandaged head, did not seem very formidable; and he was so ready to give his word not to take arms within the time proposed by the colonel, that there was no trouble at all in settling his case. Royal was more stubborn; yet there was something in the dignified courtesy of the colonel, something in the half sarcastic way in which he referred to the lad's birthplace, to his ancestry, and his father's loyalty to his country, that finally broke down the boy's obduracy, and he confessed that it was not so much a matter of principle as of bravado which had caused him to take the other side, and he gave his parole with Jack.

"Then you are safe not to fight against your country for a year," said the colonel. "At the end of that time you may see more clearly that it would not show a lack of manhood to fight for her."

Royal made no reply, but accepted with a good grace the colonel's advice to say at home quietly. It is doubtful if he had been quite so ready to accept the situation, if his father had been present at the interview; but he with good judgment stayed away, and, indeed, Royal did not see him again till the matter was half-forgotten.

He rode back to camp with the colonel, but not before he had had a talk with Marianne. "I think it is best for all concerned that I remain at camp," he told her. "I shall, perhaps, be able some day to tell my son that I am not ungrateful to him for having saved my life, but now does not seem the best time for it."

"He wasn't in a very good humor this morning," Marianne confessed. "I suppose he thinks you had something to do with his capture."

"Well, you can tell him I didn't. It's best that we should not meet for a time, and I can leave, feeling secure in your safety. I hope we can get your mother home before long."

"And I, too. Jerusha is very capable, but one does want one's own mother."

"Yes, I can well imagine that. I want her, too. Jerusha will attend to our wounded man; you will not have anything to do there."

"He isn't very badly hurt. I thought he must be, at first. I should like to get word to his family."

"Asa tells me that he sent them a message by Fire-Eyes."

"That was thoughtful of him. He is such a funny, queer old fellow, that Asa; but I think he has a very good heart."

Mr. Reyburn smiled. "Yes, he is a queer Dick, but he is all right. Now I must be off, daughter. I see the colonel coming. Do the best you can, and if I don't see you soon, I will let you hear from me." He rode off, and Marianne returned to the house feeling rather disappointed that her father was not to be on hand to consult, and to direct affairs.

She found her days passed busily enough. There was more or less excitement at this time, for there was the constant expectation of an attack upon the British from the Americans, and, indeed, several abortive attempts to advance upon Canada were made. There were days when the thunder of guns from the batteries on one side or the other of the river, struck terror to those living near by; but little was accomplished beyond the destruction of some stores at Black Rock and the injuries to General Porter's house, in which

he made his headquarters, being then in command of a body of New York militia.

Had she willed it otherwise, Marianne at that time had few moments for Jack, a fact of which he complained, but only laughed good-naturedly when she remarked severely that he was treated a thousand times better than he deserved, and that a prisoner, even on parole, could not expect more than toleration from his enemies. "Are you really my enemy?" Jack would ask, and Marianne with dignity would tell him that she most decidedly was.

The noise of the cannonading brought war almost to their very door, and gave Marianne a big scare, but Royal and Jack laughed at her fears, and Jerusha tried to comfort her by saying that death must come to all, and those that took the sword must expect to die by the sword; consequently, she had no reason to expect death from a cannon ball. Rather peculiar logic, but it had a certain effect. Jerusha, be it said, was a real comfort. She had been with the family for some fifteen years, having first appeared at Madame Desvouges's, where she applied for work, and later she was taken into the Reyburn family. She had little to tell of herself. She was originally from Maine, and had married a Canadian, whom the Reyburns supposed to have been a worthless sort of fellow. Jerusha, however, seldom made references to her past life, but she

had a fine scorn of men in general. She was brusque of manner, plain of speech, energetic, capable and trustworthy to a degree, and quite content and grateful for the home offered her. She was specially fond of Marianne, whom she always called Mary Anne, to the girl's discontent. Whether Jerusha preferred the name, or whether she used it from a grim sense of humor and a desire not to cater to small vanities, no one ever knew. She was in her element with the responsibility of the housekeeping and a sick man to look after; for the greater call upon her, the better she liked it. Though usually a taciturn and rather melancholy person, her spirits rose in an emergency; and the more depressed were those around her, the more cheerful she became, accentuating her speech with trite maxims and quotations from Scripture.

It was one day when Marianne felt particularly despondent that Jerusha's prophecies came really true. All the morning Marianne had complained of loneliness, seemed possessed of forebodings, and longed for her mother, and Jerusha had answered her with, "It's always darkest before day" and "Every cloud has a silver lining," concluding with "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver him out of them all."

"I'm afraid I'm not very righteous, then," said Marianne, petulantly.

"Now, Mary Anne, don't you go speaking lightly of Scripture," Jerusha chided her by saying. "I guess we all fall short, if it comes to that. I ain't a saint, but the Lord has delivered me from the hand of the ungodly. This is a vale of tears, to be sure, but sometimes them very tears waters joy and gladness. I rather guess your ma's more anxious to see you 'n you are to see her."

"If she were, she'd try and come home."

"Now, that's what I call right down undutiful," returned Jerusha. "You'll forget your fifth commandment next. There's your brother removed from the device of the enemy, and your father freed from the pit digged for him, and you're safe and sound. What's the use of complaining? Count your mercies, child; count 'em over."

Marianne leaned her head against the woman's shoulder. "But I am homesick for mother."

"I guess you ain't the only one's been homesick in her life," returned Jerusha, giving a vicious dig to the pumpkin she was paring. "There's some that never expects to git a sight of their home ag'in, and they live and move and have their bein' just the same. Your mother'll come when you ain't looking for her."

And sure enough, about dusk the very next evening, who should appear but Mrs. Reyburn, laughing, crying, chattering half in French, half in English:

"Nomme de Grace! but I am glad to embrace you again, my daughter. Ciel! but I have a mind not to love you at all. Oui, ma chère, vous êtes mechante to steal away from your poor mother in such fashion. Grand'mère, how she was mystified, and how she was outraged that you did not confide in her! As for me, I wept tears, such tears that my pillow was damp from them. But they send love, all. And Victor, he goes about as a sick owl. Royal we have not seen at all. I know not where he is. We are afraid he has been made responsible for your father's escape. I am anxious, yet I make my first opportunity to come over, and here I am."

"Oh, mother, mother, but I am glad to see you," Marianne murmured, patting her face. "And yes, I forgot, you did not know; Royal is here."

"Mon Dieu!" screamed Mrs. Reyburn, raising her hands. "My son is here?"

"Yes." Marianne told her the story, concluding with: "Mother dear, it is well you have come home, for you see we need you, and besides, you are forgetting your English which you spoke so well."

"Naughty child, I do not forget."

"But you are speaking French half the time, and the other half it is with the accent of my grandmother."

Mrs. Reyburn laughed. "It is because I am ex-

cited. I will soon become accustomed to my English, now I am at home." But the hands went up again. "Tiens! I have forgot. Our guest, where is she?"

"She? Who is she? You mean, I think, the wounded Jack Silverthorn."

"No, no; I did not tell you in my joy to embrace you again. It is the sister of your wounded prisoner, your Silverthorn. She came with me. It was she who procured the passes through the lines, that she might come and see her brother."

"Kate, or Sue, is it?"

"The one called Kate. I left her with her brother, whom we found on the porch outside, too late in the evening for a man who has been ill, I thought. I sent them inside, and there they must be now."

"Then I must go to her at once. I am very glad to have dear Kate. Ah, but I am happy now, with my mother and my good friend of whom I am so fond. Dearest mother, if you but knew how mother-sick I have been."

Her mother gathered her again in her arms, and they stood in a silent embrace for a moment. Then Marianne withdrew herself and said, "I must go and give Kate a welcome, but I shall not stay long, for I want to hear all you have to tell me."

She found Kate in animated conversation with Jack. "Am I not an impertinent piece?" Kate cried.

"I invite myself here without so much as a 'by your leave.' But the message alarmed us so! The Indian brought it, you know, and we felt sure that Jack must be much worse than he said; but see him, as lively as a cricket! Sue at first insisted that she would come, but she gave in when grandfather said that she was halfway an American already, and we might count upon never seeing her again if she once escaped to this side. Behind his back she told me that she thought after all that I might as well come and learn her way of thinking, which speech, if grandfather had heard, he would have scolded her well for."

"You would both have been welcome," Marianne assured her, "and now we have one of you here, we will try to keep you till you do become Americanized. Your brother does not need much nursing. His sprained ankle seems now to be the worst of his troubles, and it is but a question of time when that will be well. Royal and Jerusha and Asa Peaslee have been his nurses, so he has not lacked for attention, I can assure you."

"Royal?" The color flamed up into Kate's cheeks, and she stooped over to caress a purring cat which had followed Marianne into the room.

"Yes, Royal. You didn't know he was here?"

"No, I hadn't heard," Kate returned, in a low voice.

"We had not seen him, but that was not strange, seeing that Jack was away from home; and, besides, a soldier's duties make him rather an uncertain visitor." She was a little confused, but quickly regained her composure, and then Marianne bore her off to her own little room in a corner of the sloping roof, and there they chattered as girls will, till Marianne, jumping up, declared that she was neglecting her duties, and would Kate come with her to the kitchen.

A big cheerful room it was, with white-washed walls, great open fireplace, and well-scrubbed floor. Mrs. Reyburn was already bustling about, exclaiming at this and that thing, and excusing all deficiencies upon the ground of her absence. "Not that you and Jerusha have not done famously," she said to Marianne, "but I see many things to be made ready for winter. My faith! but I am glad to be at home again, with my husband safe and both my children beside me."

"And other people's children as well," put in Kate. "You are very good to take us in, but I really see no reason why we should remain long to burden your hospitality, for Jack is comparatively well now, though the hypocrite pretends he is not." She looked up lovingly at her brother, who had followed the girls into the kitchen, using a crutch to assist him.

"Comparatively well," he repeated. "If you had

been knocked over by a bullet, and sent rolling down a cliff, banging your head and arms and legs against every tree in your way, I don't believe you'd call yourself comparatively well for a year."

"A year! Am I given to suppose that you mean to stay here a year?" Kate asked.

"I'll stay here as long as they'll keep me," returned Jack, with a laugh. "There's no use in going home when I can't fight; besides, I am told our troops are half starved and half clothed. Do you imagine I could think of going with that ragout of Mrs. Reyburn's in my nostrils?"

They all laughed, and Marianne declared that since it was all a matter of loaves and fishes, and though the Bible said, that if our enemy hungered, we should feed him, yet she thought that Master Silverthorn might have found a better excuse for staying. Whereupon Jack told her that he had excuse enough, which he had more than once sought to reveal to her, but that she would not hear it. Marianne tossed her head impatiently at this and announced that it was her intention to go immediately to the dairy, and would Kate go with her. As for Jack, he would best remain where he was and tell her mother his fibs; perhaps she could be made to believe them, but as for Marianne herself, she knew better.

CHAPTER IX

A Little Fun

THE year 1812 was closing with but small encouragement to the land forces of the Americans. General Van Rensselaer having resigned, his command was turned over to the bombastic Smyth, who was a veritable windbag. His high-sounding proclamations, however, had some effect, for they brought volunteers flocking to the front. But these found their leader a man of words and not of deeds, for, after twice bringing them to the very brink of an invasion into Canada, he recalled them, and thereby brought down such jeers and threats upon his devoted head that he at last retired to his home in Virginia.

Mr. Reyburn, like most of his comrades, chafed and fumed under all these disappointments. Since his return he had been raised to the rank of captain, and was now more away from home than ever. He and his son never met, for Royal made a point of getting out of the way when he saw his father coming. The young man felt somewhat embarrassed at the position

he was in as paroled prisoner in his father's house, and he also felt somewhat aggrieved that his father had not acknowledged his efforts in saving him from a savage enemy. On the other hand, Captain Reyburn saw that Royal made a point of keeping out of his way, and he made no advances.

"They are both entirely too proud," said Marianne to her mother. "I think Royal might give in, because he is the younger, and he knows father appreciates what he did for him; because I told Royal what father said."

"It will all come right in time," her mother told her, "in the meantime let us be thankful that we have them both so near. Your father complains at the inaction, but I am thankful enough that it is so quiet. Here comes the dear man now. Let us welcome him with cheerful faces."

"Such management!" said Captain Reyburn, throwing off his cap, and sitting down before the fire. "As if it were not enough to have incompetent leaders, but some idiot must circulate the report among the militia, that if they cross into Canada for military purposes, they become liable for five years' service, becoming regulars in so doing. Such talk! yet there is nothing but desertion and rioting to be heard of. The only fighting the men seem to be able to do is that among themselves, and their

leaders are not any better. By George! I wish I were back in Kentucky; there they are putting out real stuff, true soldiers with William Henry Harrison at their head. I wish I were with them. Ordered into winter quarters, when our force, if it had any grit to back it, could knock out the British over on the other side in no time! They don't begin to have the number of troops we have. Imagine! brought to the very brink of an invasion, and then ordered back, the regulars to winter quarters and the volunteers to their homes!"

Marianne brought her two hands smartly together. "Oh, then you are at home for good! How glad I am! We knew that the expedition was given up, but we heard there had been some fighting, and we were afraid that there was more to come."

"I wish to Heaven there were more to expect. Yes, I am at home for a time. It's a pretty poor outlook for our success, as things are now."

"We've given 'em some good licks on the sea," said Asa Peaslee, who had come in and was listening to Captain Reyburn's report. "I've half a mind to jine the marines myself. I ain't much of a climber, an' I dunno 's I wouldn't tumble kerflunk on deck, if I was to try to shinny up them ropes, but I like to be on the winnin' side; and, seein' as there ain't much glory to be had soldierin' around these parts, I dunno's I won't

light out and go where it's more excitin'. You're goin' to be at home now, cap'n, and my days of usefulness so far's helpin' you out is concerned, is most over."

"I thought you meant to fight only in self-defence, Asa," put in Marianne.

"That's what I said; but I guess it'll be self-defence if I git a sight of the enemy's weapons," he replied dryly. "S'long as they ain't no Injun fightin', I kin stand it, but I would like to save my scalp, seein' as I've kep' a-holt of it all these years. Injuns ain't sea-farin' folks, and when a fellow hears of victories like the *Constitution* over the *Garter*, and the *Wasp* takin' the *Frolic*, seems as if he'd like to be there. I guess I'll be hitchin' along in a day or two, and see what gol-durned foolishness I'll be gittin' into next. I don't seem to be able to keep from meddlin' somewheres. Used to be always pokin' my fingers into the pies and cakes when I was a youngster, and gittin' licked for it, so I guess it's inborn original sin's the matter with me now that makes me just ache to be gittin' into trouble."

True to his word, he started away one morning soon after, saying, at parting: "You ain't rid of me for good, I guess. If I don't git blowed up, or scalped, or hacked to pieces, like as not I'll be coming this way ag'in, when there's anything goin' on. I'm the curios-est fellow you ever did see; must be pokin' my nose

into other folk's consarns, and never can mind my own business."

Marianne watched him depart, having first loaded him down with provisions. "I like the old fellow," she told Kate. "I suppose he may be shrewd in driving a bargain, and doesn't always tell the exact truth about his wares, but he is so good-hearted and brave, though he pretends he is neither."

"He poses for an innocent," said Kate, "but he is really pretty smart, and knows a heap more than he tells. Here come our brothers. Shall we go and meet them?"

"You may, if you choose," replied Marianne, "but I've something better to do."

Kate caught her around the waist, and laughing said: "You don't escape this time. You always make that excuse. Do you really dislike poor Jack so much?"

"You know I do," replied Marianne, struggling to get away.

"Just because he fought on the other side?"

"No, not that altogether, but you know he was very rude to me when he first saw me, that time in the woods."

"When he pulled you out of the bog? Did you want to stay there?"

"Stop teasing, Kate. You know it wasn't that, but he made fun of me."

"He thought you a small child. He doesn't make fun of you now. I am sure he is as polite as possible."

"Yes, but — it is really because he is on the enemy's side."

"So is your brother, but you don't dislike him."

"That is a very different thing. One ought not to hate her own brother ; and besides, Royal is fond of me."

"Then if Jack were fond of you, you'd be fond of him."

"How you do make one choose words. Let me go, Kate. I don't like him, so there ; I am sorry he is your brother, for you I love." She suddenly broke away, then returned to throw her arms around Kate, and kiss her over and over again, after which she ran into the house, without so much as a look at the two coming up the walk.

Jack still limped a little, but he leaned on Royal's arm, and the two were talking animatedly. "Where has Marianne run to?" Royal asked. "We wanted to tell her the latest news."

"And what is that?" Kate asked. "Am I not to hear it?"

"It is reported that there is going to be trouble with the Indians on the western frontier."

"O dear!" Kate looked distressed. "That is the worst thing to dread. I wish I could see the right of this war, anyhow."

Jack shook his head. "You'd better not let Captain Reyburn or Marianne hear you say that. They think there is righteous cause enough."

"Do you?" Kate asked quickly.

"Looking at it from their side, I think they have, maybe, though I wouldn't confess it to any one else. I don't wonder that they got mad at the impressment of their seamen; still, I've no doubt England would have made that all right, and I think the States were too hasty in the matter."

"Since I have been here," Kate returned, "I can see how they love liberty beyond anything else, and that they believe the mother country considers the United States only as a naughty child who has been too impudent, and that she wants them still to feel her power. I don't much wonder that they resent that, and that they want to show her that they can stand alone after their splendid fight for freedom in the Revolution."

Jack laughed. "What would grandfather say to such a speech?"

"He would rage and rant, and call upon King George to witness that he had always been loyal, no matter what views his descendants might hold. Poor grandfather, I'm afraid he'll think we are entire renegades when we go back."

"And when will that be?"

"As soon as we can."

"That's a very indefinite time. What's the use of going at all, when I've given my word not to fight for so many months? Here's Royal, declaring that he isn't going to stay at home because his father is back again. I might get into just such a state of mind concerning grandfather if I went back; and if one cannot be at home, he might as well be in one place as another. I propose to stay."

"Why don't you say something, Royal?" Kate asked. "Shall we go or stay?"

"Stay," Royal answered. "The war can't last very long at this rate. You see how utterly the States have failed in carrying the war into Canada, and it will not be long before there will be peace."

"And are you really not going to live at home while your father is here?"

"I am not. I am going to stay at Will Fenton's."

Kate looked at him wistfully. She wanted to tell him that she did not think he was doing the best thing, but she hesitated. "You don't have to meet your father, even if you stay at home," she said at last, "and it would please your mother to have you stay."

Royal began to make fantastic figures in the path with the stick he carried. "It's awkward enough as it is," he replied. "It has come to such a pass now that my father just nods to me when we meet, and

never has a word to say if I am by. I don't want to spoil it for the rest, and I think I'd better keep away and only come home when he is not here."

Kate looked thoughtfully out into the winter sunlight, but made no comment. "To return to the subject of our staying," she said, after a pause. "I think I ought to go back, even if Jack is determined to stay. I ought not to desert Sue any longer."

But when Marianne was told this, she declared against it. "Just as winter is coming on, and there will be sleigh-rides and skating, and all sorts of frolics, it would be too bad to leave and go over to that stupid place where you will not have half the fun you would here. You mustn't think of it." And forthwith she began to contrive a series of amusement to keep her friend. She consulted Royal on the subject, and found him quite ready to further her schemes. "We will show them, Royal," she said, with a toss of her head, "we will show them that, backwoodsmen though our father and grandfather were, we know how to dance and entertain. The elegance of Monsieur Silverthorn, vieux, the fine manners he pretends to have bequeathed to his grandson, I don't find them after being with you and Victor, who can bow and dance with the grace of a marquis. Bah! do you suppose that old withered Tory over there can hold a candle to our grandfather Desvouges, of whom grand'mère tells us? Such a gal-

lant, he; so beautiful to behold in his satins and velvets! Ah me! I wish we had satins and velvets to wear. In homespun we will attire ourselves; yet we will not forget the graces of our ancestors, even if some of our guests do despise us."

"All this, I suppose, is a tirade against Jack Silverthorn," said Royal, coolly. "Why do you think he despises you? I am sure he has never given you reason to think so, and it was but yesterday that Kate said she had never seen a girl more graceful than you."

"Ah, Kate! yes, of course she would say that. She always is sweet and lovely. I was not thinking of her. I wish to show Mr. Silverthorn that I do not lack for partners in a dance, and do not have to go seeking them among refugee Tories."

"Chut! Chut! Marianne, your tongue runs away with you at times. Yet I should like the dance well enough. I suppose Kate and Jack would like it, too, though perhaps we had better ask them."

"Nonsense, of course they will like it, and I do not want them to know till it is all arranged. We will have it in the barn. A big, big place, we want. It shall be a real frolic. We will have no lack of guests, I assure you, for there are the military to draw upon. We will say it is in Kate's honor, and we will have Long Joe to play for us, if we can get him. I wish Victor were here, he dances so well; it is the one

thing that he does better than any one I know. Good old Victor, he never lets me lack for a partner."

When all the arrangements were made for the dance, Kate and Jack were told, and cheerfully accepted the arrangement; though Jack may have had a passing thought that some other form of entertainment would be better suited to a man with a weak ankle. Yet he offered his help with a good grace.

At the suggestion of Captain Reyburn the affair resolved itself into a husking-bee, followed by a dance. "In that way," said he, "I'll get my work done, and you'll have your fun. Half the boys around are ready for an invitation, and I think you'll have some difficulty in providing partners for them all."

"I know a way out of that difficulty," said Marianne, patriotically. "We will not invite any one of the men who have not been or who are not in our army."

"Ho! Ho!" laughed her father. "That is a good way out of it. I've no doubt we shall find the soldier lads eager enough for sport of that kind."

"I'll leave you to choose which ones ought to be invited," said Marianne, "and I think we can find girls enough, if we depend upon Black Rock as well as Lewiston. My only anxiety is whether we can supply sufficient refreshments."

"Trust your mother for that," replied her father. "Between my wife and Jerusha, I reckon no one will

go away hungry." And, indeed, for days Mrs. Reyburn was in her element. She liked nothing better than to provide a feast, and to show her skill in using her mother's famous recipes. So there were great pasties of game, huge roasts of venison, doughnuts rolled in maple sugar, pumpkin cake, and pies of many kinds in turnover shape.

"My!" exclaimed Kate, when the last pie came from the oven. "I never saw such a pile of goodies. That doesn't look much like war time, does it?"

"They will eat it all," Mrs. Reyburn told her. "Every time my husband comes in he tells me of some new guest he has invited, and we shall soon have room for not another one."

Truly it was a goodly company which assembled on the evening selected. The boys from the regiments now in winter quarters, Virginians, Marylanders, Kentuckians, and New Yorkers, in motley uniforms; the girls from the villages and the surrounding country, in homespun, deerskin, or calico; a few Canadians, who had taken refuge on the American side of the river, and all eager for a frolic.

The huge piles of Indian corn lay ready for the huskers; the table groaned with its load of pasties, cakes, and pies; torches and pine-knot fires were ready to be lighted; and Marianne viewed it all with a pleased eye. "It will do," she said to Kate, "but

it is neither the husking nor the supper that I am looking forward to; it is the dance. I long for the dance. Don't you, Kate?"

Kate hesitated, blushed, looked down. She could not bear to dampen Marianne's ardor, and all this time she had failed to tell her. "I—you see, I don't know much about it. Grandfather is such an old Puritan—and—he never liked to have us—and so we—that is—I have never learned." She looked helplessly at Marianne when she had stammered out this piece of information.

Marianne stared at her in surprise, then she laughed merrily, but in some embarrassment. "And I have given this frolic for you, and took it for granted that you danced. What a stupid I am! Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I didn't want to spoil your fun. I saw that the dance was what you liked the best. I can husk corn, you know, and I shall love to watch the dancers."

"You shall do more. Where is Royal? Where is your brother? Ah, that Victor were here to play the violin for us! He plays with much feeling, that Victor." She darted out of the log building and came back with her brother and Jack. "I am the most stupid!" she exclaimed. "I am a selfish one, to be sure. I prepare an entertainment for my friends, and behold,

one does not dance, and the other cannot because of his sprained ankle. Did you ever know such a stupid, Royal? But come, in the little time that is before us we must teach Kate the figures. Come, Mr. Jack, you must hobble through it somehow."

She extended her hand, and Jack led her out upon the rough floor. "We'll have no music," he said.

Marianne gave him a little side glance, and drew from her pocket a queer little instrument, upon which she began to play a quaint tune, piping out the few notes with a sweet shrillness while she kept time with her foot. Jack looked at her in wonder. "How unlike any other girl you are," he said; "you are full of surprises. Where did you get that curious little pipe?"

"Victor made it for me," Marianne told him, exhibiting the little pipe with some pride.

"Has it a name? I never saw one like it before."

"No, it has no special name. You see it is neither a fife nor a horn nor a whistle, though Victor and I usually call it the little horn. I think he was very clever to make it. He taught me to play upon it while he played his violin. Come now; one, two, three. Advance, Royal."

Royal led Kate toward her, they swung corners, balanced, bowed to imaginary couples, represented by stalks of corn, and finally the dance stopped. Marianne gave a nod to Kate, saying: "You will do.

Royal will see that you do not lack for partners who can guide you properly. As for you, Mr. Jack, I am afraid you have already been kept too long on your lame ankle."

"I suppose that this must be my last dance," said Jack, dejectedly. "One does not feel very graceful, I imagine, dancing with a lame man."

Marianne gave a little shrug of her shoulders and walked away, saying: "There are those who could make a more courteous speech, Mr. Jack, and who would say I am not ungraceful at any time; but, of course, an awkward little girl, as I am in your eyes, cannot be expected to show grace, except under very fortunate circumstances."

"What a dolt I am!" Jack hastened to explain. "I didn't mean that; you know I didn't. Why do you always try to twist my words into a wrong meaning? Are you never going to forgive me for that unlucky first meeting?"

"Oh, unlucky, of course, since otherwise I should, perhaps, never have met you at all."

Jack hobbled up to her and looked down into the blue eyes, which met his stonily. "I wish I knew whether you really hate me or whether you merely try to tease me when you say such things."

"You cannot think I would take the trouble to tease you," Marianne answered, moving away. "You .

know full well how I feel toward my country's enemies." Whereupon Jack heaved a sigh and looked so disconsolate that Kate fancied he was suffering, and solicitously came over to him, begging him to find a place where he could be seated comfortably.

"You shouldn't have tried the dance, Jack," she said.

"But I enjoyed it." His eyes were following Marianne, who was lighting up the torches, which flared out from the dingy walls of the log building.

"You look as if you were enjoying yourself now," Kate laughed. "I see, Jack, that little tease has been saying something sharp. Don't mind her; she doesn't mean half she says." And then the guests came trooping in, glad to get under cover from the cold.

CHAPTER X

The Husking and What Followed

FOR a couple of hours the fun over the husking was fast and furious ; and by ten o'clock three rousing cheers gave evidence that the task was completed, though to her discomfiture, Marianne's was not the winning side.

A big, burly Frenchman was hoisted upon a clumsy platform, and soon his fiddle sung out a merry tune ; then amid much laughter the dancing began. A fantastic picture the scene made, only possible on the frontier. Erect young soldiers, decked out in the best uniforms at their command, stepped through the figures with dignified carriage ; gay young Frenchmen, some clad in the silks and satins brought over by their forefathers a century before ; others, in the deerskin garments of the habitant, bowed and pirouetted with an elegance handed down from some courtly sire ; rough militiamen, farmer boys in homespun or buckskin, galloped about awkwardly, making the floor resound with the energy of their steps. The smoky flare of the torches

lighted up the fair faces of the girls, most of them in gay calicoes, though some wore the silken gowns hoarded by their mothers. Few wore other shoes than moccasins, though here and there a pair of satin-clad feet would twinkle from under the brocaded petticoats. The big room was dingy with smoke, ill lighted, and none too warm. Against its rough walls the entertainers had fastened long stalks of corn, whose dry blades rustled as the dancers swept by. Clumsy benches were ranged along the sides, and mixed with the odor of the burning pine-knots was the scent of the corn and the leathery odor of the deerskin garments.

Marianne and Kate wore cotton prints, and, in imitation of a fashion then in vogue, they had each contrived from some "book-muslin" curtains which had been lying away, a scarf, trimmed around the hem with a frill of lace lent by Mrs. Reyburn for the occasion. They were a little conscious of the responsibility their vanity brought them, for Mrs. Reyburn had given them many charges to be careful of the lace which her mother's mother had brought from France, and which could never be replaced if anything were to happen to it. Rather incongruous it was, to be sure, worn with the gay calico gowns, but the girls were vastly pleased with this addition of elegance to their costumes.

"I am sure we will look as fine as any one," Marianne had declared as she stood on tip-toe to peep into the small mirror over her bureau. "I am so pleased that we found this book-muslin. It is a little stiff, but it will become more flowing the longer we wear it. Mother has lent me her brooch. I should like to have my curious bracelet, but it does not spoil my pleasure to be deprived of it."

Nothing did spoil her pleasure, although she felt a small pang of envy to see that Minerva Ashman, the prettiest girl in the room, was one of the few who wore a silk gown. And although she could not bear Jack Silverthorn, Marianne told herself that he needn't have singled out the belle of the evening for his special attentions. He might have been more polite to her, if only for appearance' sake; but she remembered that he had begun their acquaintance by being rude, and she didn't care, she had plenty of partners,—which in truth she had, and so did Kate, who acquitted herself nobly in the matter of dancing, in spite of her declaring that she had no knowledge of the figures.

Marianne's most devoted admirer was a young Kentuckian, who claimed distant cousinship. Mr. Reyburn had brought him up to present to his daughter, and beamed with pleasure as he told her he had discovered a kinsman from his native State. "This is Sergeant

Frederic Lyle," he told her. "Come to find out, he is a cousin upon my mother's side; your grandmother was a Lyle, you know, and you must make your cousin Fred feel at home."

"A cousin? How nice!" Marianne exclaimed. "I have not many cousins. Am I to say Cousin Fred or Mr. Lyle?"

"Cousin Fred, please," said the young man, eagerly. "It will make it seem so much more like home; and I hope I may say Cousin Marianne."

"Why, yes, I have no objection; and it is a poor rule that will not work both ways. Do you dance? Shall I find you a partner? Minerva Ashman is the belle of the evening, you see, and if you have not been presented—"

"I need not be. She seems to be quite well attended. The young gentlemen hover around her like moths around a candle. I must confess such brilliant beauty does not attract me. I can find greater charms closer at hand." He bowed gallantly. "If you have not promised the next dance, may I hope that you will honor me?"

"I am afraid the next is promised, but—"

"The next, then?"

"Yes, I can give you that." And her father nodded approvingly as she swept by with this new cousin.

"They make a pretty good-looking couple," he said

with satisfaction to his wife. But Mrs. Reyburn did not reply. There was Victor, absent and out of mind. She agreed with her mother that no better match for Marianne could be found than Victor, and in time it might be brought about. Yet she did not forget that her husband, with American notions, would hardly second her in arranging a marriage French fashion, and in thinking of this she sighed.

"Why that sigh, my wife?" Mr. Reyburn asked. "Are you tired, or does the supper not satisfy your housewifely desires?"

"It is the war of which I think," she made reply. "At all festivities we have had my family present, and now they cannot get to us nor we to them."

"To be sure; that is too bad. Well, the war will not last long, and it has brought us an increase of guests in all these soldier lads. The girls do not lack for beaux to-night."

"Ours never did," returned Mrs. Reyburn. Her eyes followed Marianne, who was smiling up into the face of the tall Kentuckian. And then her gaze wandered to where Royal sat toying with the end of Kate's scarf. "He will ruin the lace with his clumsy fingers," Mrs. Reyburn murmured. And with this thought came another of Victorine, patient and loving; of Victor, faithful and devoted, on the other side of the river.

It was nearly morning when the dance broke up.

"It was a great success," declared Kate, when the two girls had sought their chilly little room. "I never had such a good time,—no, never. I wish Sue could have been here, and then my happiness would have been complete."

Marianne was dreamily smoothing out her scarf, and did not answer. "What makes you so quiet?" Kate asked. "Are you disappointed?"

Marianne roused herself with a start. "No, no, I am not. Yes, I wish Sue could have been here; and I am glad you had a good time, Kate." She paused for a moment and then asked, "Do you think Minerva Ashman very beautiful?"

"Not beautiful, but quite handsome. She is dark and brilliant and showy, and in that dress looked very well."

"Yes, the dress was handsome. Oh, Kate, is not my new cousin a fine lad? He will be here very often, for he is homesick, poor fellow, and my father wishes him to feel that he can come here at will."

"And that will please you?"

"Certainly; a cousin, yet not too nearly related, and one who is almost a stranger; the situation is full of promise. He is a devoted patriot, and on that question we can strike hands. You can see how my father approves of him, and his manners are certainly those of a gentleman. He is not like some persons, who forget to be polite."

"Do you chance to mean any one in particular?" Kate asked.

"Oh, no," returned Marianne, indifferently. "I was speaking in a general way. But mercy! it is not far from morning, and we shall lose every bit of our beauty sleep." At which terrible suggestion Kate hurried off her clothes, and they climbed shivering into bed, to sink down comfortably into the feathers which billowed up warmly around them.

The winter promised to pass pleasantly enough. There were no specially aggressive movements upon the Niagara frontier, with the exception of a few skirmishes; the volunteers had gone to their homes, and only the regulars were in their winter camp. It was Virginia and Maryland that at this time were suffering from the depredations of the enemy, for Cockburn and his men were not idle there. On the ocean, too, battles were frequent, and from time to time came the news of more than one naval victory.

At the Reyburn farmstead there was no lack of jollity. Given an encampment of soldiers near the home of two lively girls, and it could not be expected but that good times would follow. Among the most frequent visitors was Fred Lyle, who proved himself to be a good comrade for riding, skating, or in fact for any indoor or outdoor sport. He and Marianne were on the best of terms, and if any kind of frolic were proposed, he was

the first to offer his escort. Well bundled up in furs, the merry sleigh-riders would enjoy a dash over the hard snow and appear at the house of some neighbor, who always kept on hand a supply of provisions for the comfort of just such visitors; then after the hot supper was eaten, off again they would dash. Or it might be an afternoon on the ice, cutting fantastic figures; or on mild days a horseback ride would be taken along the side of the great gorge to the wonderful falls above.

Between Marianne and Jack there had not arisen a better appearance of friendliness. They were constantly differing. "It seems to me that Marianne goes out of her way to say sharp things," Jack complained to his sister, "and she is hand in glove with that long-legged Kentucky chap, who knows entirely too well how to presume upon his distant relationship."

"That's not for you to complain of," Kate told him. "If her parents and her brother are satisfied with his way of acting, it is none of our business. He is a good fellow, Jack, and you know it. Besides, you might expect that he would receive more consideration, being an American soldier."

"But I am not in arms," grumbled Jack.

"No; but you have been."

"I just wish I had him on the other side of the river," said Jack, with decision.

"What would you do with him?" asked Kate, her dimples showing.

"I'd keep him there."

"And stay there yourself to watch him. I don't see that you'd be any better off than you are now. You might have gone home long ago, but you stayed here from preference; so you have no one to blame but yourself, if you don't like it. What's the use of fussing, Jack, just because a girl flouts you,—and a girl that you don't specially care for, too. It's just because you want to play first fiddle; and that's all there is to it."

"That's all you know about it," returned Jack. "I think my own sister might side with me, but you always stand up for Marianne every time."

"Of course I do, because she's a girl, and I'm a girl."

"Oh, and not because she's Roy's sister."

Kate drew herself up with dignity. "Jack, if you ever say such a thing again, I'll—I'll not speak to you. Don't you know that it is arranged that Royal is to marry Victorine La Rue?"

Jack stared. "Who told you such a thing?" he asked.

"Mrs. Reyburn."

"Well, I vow! Why, Kit, she's almost a hunch-back."

"But she is beautiful."

"Who says so?"

"Marianne."

"Who else?"

"Her mother—and Royal."

"Well, I vow!" repeated Jack. Then after a pause, "Well, all is, I think Royal is treating you pretty shabbily."

"Jack, don't you dare to say such a thing!" cried Kate, bursting into tears. "It isn't true. We are only good friends, and I don't want him to be anything more. Any one can see that. Every one can, can't they, Jack?"

"I can't see it, then. Look here, Kate,"—Jack put his arm around his sister,— "I wouldn't for the world make you cry. By George! I wish we'd gone home long ago. We're both pretty well knocked out by the pair of them."

Kate wiped her eyes, and rested her head on Jack's shoulder. "You mean—Marianne and Royal?"

Jack nodded.

"You are knocked out, Jack? Are you really? Do you actually care how Marianne treats you? I thought it was just your vanity that was touched. I didn't know it was your heart. Poor old Jack!"

"Don't 'poor old' me! I can stand it, I suppose; but I wish I had never seen the saucy little witch.

Let's drop it, Kate. I'm not going to give up, though. I have that much of the British bulldog about me that I know how to hold on. Yet what you tell me about Roy confounds me. I should think if there were anything of that kind settled upon, that he would have told me."

"Let's drop that, too," said Kate. "We'll try to stand it as best we can. They are all awfully good to us, Jack; and we've no claim on them. They never make us feel that we are aliens and here under protest; but oh! I want to see Sue and father."

"And I am the one who has been keeping you here all this time. It is all my fault. I ought to have thought of some one else besides myself." Jack patted the curly head resting against his shoulder. "Well, cheer up, old girl; we'll try to get back. I guess it's what is best for us both."

This conversation occurred the day upon which a little party started out for an afternoon ride. It was a mild day for the season, but the air was crisp and exhilarating. Marianne rode ahead with her two attendant knights, Jack and Fred; Kate followed with Royal. In spite of the fact that she directed most of her conversation to Fred, Jack stuck close by Marianne's side. As for Kate, she had no reason to complain of the lack of attention from her cavalier; if there was any fault to find, it was because of his

too devoted air. It hurt Kate. Why could he not joke and laugh and tease as Fred was doing? It half annoyed her that there should be long lapses of silence in which Royal would give her such glances as should be given only to the woman he loved. She tried to keep before her the face of Victorine La Rue as Marianne had described it: the face of a saint with glorious eyes, a perfect mouth, and that marvellous cloud of hair falling over her shoulders. She spoke out her thought: "It must be very hard for you to be deprived of going to your grandmother's."

"It would be under some circumstances," returned Royal. "I never thought I could be so content at home. I have always chafed under my father's rule, but now nothing seems to make much difference." He looked at Kate with a tender smile.

She lowered her lids and did not look at him as she said: "It is unfortunate that you and your father cannot come to a good understanding. If anything should happen to either of you, it would be a great sorrow to remember that you were estranged."

"Yes, I think so now. I felt that when I saw him wounded and in the hands of those savages."

"How glad you must have been to be able to rescue him, and to take him to your grandmother's. They must miss you there, when you have always spent so much of your time with them."

"No doubt they do miss me, but Victor is very capable, and he looks after everything as a son of the house would; in fact he is a son, though an adopted one."

"Victorine, his sister; I think you have told me that she is very beautiful."

"Of face, yes, poor girl."

"And of character."

"She is an angel of goodness."

"Then, in spite of her deformity, she is very lovable."

"No one could help loving her. You would if you knew her, as I hope you will some day."

Kate gave a little quick sigh. But just at that moment there was a sudden stifled scream from Marianne, and Kate drew rein. Then from the side of the road sprang out a figure which caught her bridle, and on the other side a hand was laid on Royal. Sudden shots rung out upon the air, then a horse went riderless along the road ahead. Jack was down on the ground, and Fred Lyle was struggling with a man. Kate, bewildered at this sudden onslaught, sat perfectly still, but recovering herself, leaned forward to look below the furry cap of the man who had stopped her progress. She gave an amazed cry: "Grandfather!"

"Sh!" said her captor. "Keep quiet, my girl; we'll have you home in a trice."

By this time Fred was overpowered, and Marianne, held by a pair of strong arms, was indignantly protesting against this procedure. "I'm sorry," said a voice, which sounded very familiar to Kate, "but we'll have to take you all along, if we want to get off at all. You needn't be afraid that any one is going to treat you badly, Miss Reyburn. Come, boys, we'll let the horses go."

"Oh, but my parents, they will be so alarmed!" cried Marianne. "They will think something dreadful has happened to us."

The man picked up a bit of birch bark, and scribbled on it: "We are all safe, but are prisoners. We are promised good care and a safe return." "There, sign your name to that, and we'll let your horse carry that home instead of you," said Marianne's captor, still holding her by the wrist. Marianne obeyed, and the note was fastened securely. "That will go as safe as by post," said the man. "The horse will probably go straight home." He turned Marianne's gentle little mare, gave her a light cut, and she cantered off.

By a short detour the members of the riding party were led along the cliffs to a woody path which took them to the river, which was still open. Here two boats were waiting. "This is a pretty how-do-you-do," said Fred to Marianne; "right here, in sight

of our own shores, to be carried off like a bundle of old clothes! I hope we will get over without being fired upon by our own people."

"You'll not be fired upon," said his escort. "We brought over some provender, and we've a right to go back. There are plenty of folks along here who can be bought off with a small sum; and if you think there's no bartering back and forth, you are mistaken. We are all good loyalists here, except perhaps yourself."

"I am an American soldier, and no loyalist to your British king."

"I am no loyalist, either," spoke up Marianne. "At least, I am loyal to my own country but not to that wicked old England."

"Sh!" warned Fred, fearing for the girl in her outspoken declaration; but the man only laughed. "We don't care what little lasses profess to be; it's only the men we are fighting. My son and daughter and the rest of us are good loyalists, so we are in the majority."

"Your son and daughter!" cried Marianne. "Then you are Mr. Silverthorn. I thought your voice sounded very familiar. Oh, now I don't so much mind, though it was very mean of you to grab us in this way. You'll not hurt Cousin Fred, Mr. Silverthorn? I think you ought to let him go." She laid her hand on the young man's arm.

"He's your cousin Fred, is he. I guess we don't want to hurt him, but we'll have to take him over just for the fun of the thing; and when we get home, we'll see what Jack has to say about it. We'll treat you rebels according to the way you've treated my boy and girl."

Marianne was conscious that personally she had not treated Jack very well, but she knew his creature comforts had been well supplied, and so far as the rest of her family were concerned, he would have no complaint to make; so she concluded that she would have to accept the situation, which was much less dreadful than it at first seemed.

CHAPTER XI

A Turning of the Tables

IT was nearly dark when the boat touched the opposite shore, and the company disembarked. They proceeded on their way unmolested, and at last a friendly beam ahead showed them that they were nearing the Silverthorns' house. Kate's voice trembled with eagerness as she cried, "I can see into the room, and there is Sue. Dear Sue! I wonder if she suspects."

"Not a bit of it," replied her father. "We don't give information of our secret expeditions. She will be as surprised as you were."

As the little procession came around the corner of the house, Sue came to the door and peered out. "Is that you, father?" she asked. "Down, Cæsar! you needn't bark so furiously; it's all right."

"It's myself, daughter, sure enough," her father told her. "We've brought you visitors, Sue; extra company for supper."

Then Kate darted forward and threw herself in her sister's arms. "Sue, dear old Sue, we're all here!"

"What!" Sue could hardly believe her ears. "Kate and Jack and Royal, and actually Marianne! What does it all mean?"

"It means," said her father, laughing, "that we've turned the tables and taken them all prisoners. First, they were the Reyburns' prisoners, and now they are the Silverthorns'. Come in, boys. Take this young lady upstairs, Sue; she's our prisoner, too."

"I never heard of such a thing!" Sue exclaimed. "You don't really mean it, father. Tell me the truth. I want to hear all about it."

"Want to hear all about it, hey? I shouldn't wonder if there were not a little curiosity in other quarters. It's a surprise all around. We went over the river, a party of us, to see if we could get some provender, supplies being rather short on this side, and as we were reconnoitring about there, what did we see but a party of horsemen—and horsewomen—approaching. We didn't know there were any women in the party and were a bit scared, for we thought we might be going to have a skirmish; but as they came nearer, what was our surprise to see it was our own young folks. All of a sudden it popped into my head that it would be a good joke to capture them and carry them back home again, so I spoke to the others and they fell into my plan,—thought it would be a good joke; and we hid ourselves in the bushes till

they came along, and then we grabbed them. You never saw a more startled set in your life. I thought it was high time we had our boy and girl home again ; and then it didn't seem more than right that we should entertain those who had been entertaining them, and so we brought along Miss Marianne and her company. There you have the whole story."

"That's the way of it, was it?" said Jack. "And it was a surprise to you as well as to us. I am afraid, though, that Mr. and Mrs. Reyburn will think we are rather impolite to take such unceremonious leave of them after all their kindness to us."

"You can write them as polite a note as you choose, and I reckon we'll find a way to get it through the lines ; you see we have an officer of the king right at hand,—your grandfather, the major, there."

"Is grandfather a major?" exclaimed Kate. "We will have to walk a chalk line now."

"Major Silverthorn he is, so we can dispose of our prisoners at once. Shall we draw and quarter them, major, or put them in a dungeon?" he asked, looking at Marianne with a quizzical smile as he spoke.

"Jack and Royal can return to their regiment when the call comes for action," said Major Silverthorn. "The young lady is our guest," he bowed to Marianne, "and this young gentleman—well, we'll see about him to-morrow."

"I'm on parole, sir," said Jack.

"But, bless me! you didn't try to get away; we fetched you," said his father.

"I'll not go back on my word, whether it was by my own act or not that I got away," Jack assured him.

His grandfather nodded approval. "That's an honorable spirit, my boy. I like to hear you speak so. I think we may release Mr. Lyle on parole. Consider these your quarters, Mr. Lyle. You will not go beyond the limits of our place here, you understand, but you might have worse quarters."

Worse quarters, indeed, thought Fred, as he looked around on the big comfortable room, plain in its appointments, yet boasting more than one handsome piece of furniture, brought from their old home by the Silverthorns when they fled from the States. Fred was perfectly ready to give his parole, and all but Marianne seemed quite satisfied with the state of affairs.

"I have not a stitch of clothing except what I have on," Marianne complained.

"You can go to grandmother's and get something there," Royal told her. "This is something like a joke, for no one is hurt, and we are simply returning a visit. I think even father could see the humor in this."

The reminder that she would be able to see her grandmother appeased Marianne somewhat and she showed a more contented face.

The half-dozen men who had accompanied the Silverthorns upon their expedition had tramped away as soon as the captured party was safe indoors. "Now, Miss Marianne," said Mr. Silverthorn, "it's only fair that you should pay us as long a visit as Kate paid you. You needn't be afraid that our friends that have just gone out are going to stand guard over you. They have gone for good, and you are as free as air. It was all a joke about your being a prisoner. Kate tells me that you were all very good to her and Jack, and we have no scores to settle, except that you carried Jack off and gave him a bad ankle."

"We didn't know it was Jack. I did so want to get my father home again, and it seemed the only way," she said wistfully.

Mr. Silverthorn noticed her embarrassment. "Well, well, we won't go into whys and wherefores now. You girls can have a good time, and the boys can help you."

"I'll take you over to your grandmother's the first thing to-morrow morning," said Jack.

"Royal can take me," she returned ungraciously.

Kate gave a little shiver. There was not unalloyed bliss in getting home again. She had forgotten that

Royal now would find no obstacle to his daily visits to his grandmother's.

But here Royal spoke up. "We'll all go. Wouldn't you like the ride, Miss Kate?"

"Yes," she returned, brightening. If Royal were willing that she should be present at this first meeting, it could not be so important an occasion to him as one might suppose.

The new condition of affairs did not appear very distasteful to any concerned. The sisters were rejoiced to be together again; Royal did not seem to be distressed at being an inmate of his friend's home; Jack was pleased for more reasons than one, and his father beamed genially upon them all. Even Major Silverthorn unbent somewhat, and it was quite a jolly company that sat around the supper table; and when the next day Mr. Silverthorn brought word that they had obtained an indorsement of their disposal of Fred Lyle's case, it did not seem that Mr. Lyle was very much perturbed by the news that he would be compelled to stay where he was. Indeed, the whole thing seemed more like a frolic than anything else, and so the Silverthorns treated it, making many sly allusions to the manner in which they had been compelled to act in order to get their friends to visit them.

The girls enjoyed the situation, as what girls would not. They chattered and laughed and had their con-



"Each with her attendant cavalier, rode up the morning after
the capture"



fidences in the same fashion as has existed and will exist as long as there are girls.

The surprise they gave Madame Desvouges was such as might be expected. Marianne and Kate, each with her attendant cavalier, rode up the morning after the capture, startling Victorine from her corner and the grandmother from her buttery. "Mon Dieu de la France! What is that, Victorine?" called the old lady. "Some foraging party, I think. At this rate we shall soon have nothing left. Where is Victor?" But Victor had already seen the riders come up and was hurrying toward them. He had caught sight of a little figure that gladdened his heart, and he could not hasten fast enough.

"That is no foraging party," declared Victorine. "Those are women's voices. A visit from some of the neighbors, no doubt." And then the door was flung open, and in ran Marianne crying: "Where is everybody? Grand'mère! Victorine!"

"Nomme de Dieu!" cried Madame Desvouges. "It is my granddaughter. What surprise is this?"

Marianne jumped up and down, hugged her grandmother, flew to Victorine, then back to her grandmother. "Are you not amazed?" she asked. "We did not know we were coming; we thought ourselves prisoners. It is all very droll, as you will think when you hear the story. Let me present my friends. Mr.

Jack Silverthorn you have met, I think, and his sister is here, too. So is Royal." Kate was standing back a little, looking with all her eyes at the fair face of Victorine.

"And where is Royal?" asked the old lady. "Does he not intend to embrace his grandmother?" She stood on tiptoe to kiss the young man on each cheek, and then turned to Victorine. "Where are you, my daughter? Come and see this naughty boy." Kate gave a little gasp as Royal bent to kiss Victorine's proffered cheek. He passed his hand over her beautiful hair. "You are as like an angel as ever, Victorine," he said in a low voice. And into the lovely eyes came a look of tender joy. "And you, Royal, are as like to a big naughty boy as ever."

"No angel about me," he laughed. "No, I am very human." They spoke in French, which Kate only half understood, but she needed no interpretation of Victorine's happy smile.

"And Victor! Mercy, Victor," cried Marianne, as the young man entered, "you look scared to death! Am I, then, so frightful?" She ran to him and then danced away again, making shocking faces at him, and laughing and shaking her head as he attempted to come near her. "You are not allowed to kiss the prisoners without permission from the authorities," she cried.

Victor turned to Royal. "What does she mean?"

"Come, come, Marianne," said her brother, "keep still and let us tell them the story. You fly about like a feu follet. Sit down and let us tell them the tale."

"And I will be the story-teller," Marianne announced. "No, no, I shall let no one else tell it. I mean that grandmamma shall hear it from me, for I know just what she will like best to know." And she proceeded with her recital, interrupted by many exclamations, accompanied by lifting of hands and shruggings of shoulders. "And so," concluded Marianne, "we are all here, and how long we stay depends upon how soon we can get away."

"A wise speech, surely," laughed grand'mère. "But must you be always at the house of your captors? Is not your proper place with your grandmother?"

Marianne stole a mischievous glance at Kate, and said solemnly, "But you see, grand'mère, you let one prisoner get away."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Madame. "I let him get away! It was your own wicked contriving, ungrateful one. Was it not well enough as it was, with the entire family safe under my roof?"

"Yes, it was as it should be for all of us but my father, and he did not know what might be his lot. He did not know what a terrible fate might be his, for you

know all these wicked Britishers treat their prisoners with great disrespect and rudeness, even if they are not absolutely cruel."

"I protest," cried Jack, growing very red. But Kate laughed, and said: "You see, Madame, we have a very difficult prisoner to deal with, and we should not allow her out of our sight, otherwise she should be handed over to her relatives. We promise you, however, that when she gets to be more than we can manage, that we shall send her to you; and in any case, she shall see you often."

"And you will come to see me," said Marianne, nodding to Victorine, "you and Victor."

"Yes, please come," Kate urged earnestly. She went up to Victorine and held out her two hands. "I want you to come and see us. We have not been very long in the neighborhood, and we know few of the people."

Victorine looked at her wistfully. This bright sunny girl, the very embodiment of health and strength and fine proportion, did she really want her friendship? "Please say you will come," Kate begged, with her own sweet smile. "Your brother will bring you, I am sure."

"I do not often leave maman," Victorine pleaded as an excuse.

"She will come, too. Oh, yes, she will. We will

make an occasion. We will have a birthday party, and I know you will not refuse to come." She begged so earnestly that Madame herself, when asked, gave a promise that satisfied Kate, and they all trooped out, leaving the little grandmother well pleased.

But that night, long after all others were asleep, Kate lay broad awake, her thoughts intent upon the pathetic, beautiful face of Victorine La Rue, and she whispered: "Never, never! I will never stand between them. It would be a wickedness for which I could never forgive myself. We must find a way to make her happy; hers is the first claim. Royal must not stay here." And in her little room under the sloping roof, Victorine was on her knees, murmuring broken prayers, the tears streaming from her eyes. "Make me patient, dear Lord. Not my happiness, but his. Mother Mary, pity me, help me!"

The next day Kate linked her arm in Jack's, and drew him down the path which led from the house. "I want to talk to you, Jack," she said. "I want you to help me to get Royal away. He ought to go to his grandmother's, where he is needed."

"Why—why," Jack stammered. Then he was silent for a space. "I see, Kate," he said, after a while. "I think I understand. Do you think it is really as you were told?"

"It ought to be so."

"The girl has a lovely face, but I don't think Royal cares in that way."

"She does, and that is enough. Oh, Jack, I have strength and youth and everything. She is one of God's unfortunates, and shall it be my place to snatch this happiness from her, when she has been brought up to think it will be hers?"

"Kate, you are a good girl."

"No, no. You don't know anything about it. I could never be happy if I did one small thing to add to her burden. If—if after I have done all I can, and then it does not turn out as it should, Jack,—don't you see that I shall then have nothing to reproach myself for?"

"I see; and for my part, I'll do my best to help you, Kate. It is rather a delicate situation, but I think we can let Royal understand that it is from no lack of hospitality on our part."

"Then you will undertake it."

"Yes—Kate."

"Yes."

"Marianne—do you think she likes her cousin? And I say, I've had hard thoughts, but I'd be ashamed to do less than you. I—perhaps I ought not to stand in the way."

"But that is different," Kate interrupted eagerly. "He is on equal ground with you. One is as strong

and well as the other. If anything," she laughed, "he has the advantage in looks. There's no need for your Quixoticism there, Jack. Besides—" she hesitated, "you have no reason to think yourself favored, or that you could stand in any one's way."

"That's so," returned Jack, so dejectedly that Kate hastened to say: "But that is no reason why you should not be some day. I am sure Marianne does not care for her cousin or any one else in a romantic way."

"You think not?" doubtfully.

"No, I don't. I have been watching her. I think she has a genuine affection for Victor La Rue, but it is not like being in love."

"I never thought of him. By George! I have no doubt but that is what her grandmother would like. He's a good fellow, but since I had my ideas set upon the other fellow, I can't quite accept a possible rivalry with the other one."

"Oh, I am not sure at all that she likes him best; but at all events, you have no reason to think that Marianne would ever listen to you."

"No," said Jack, disconsolately. "I suppose it is folly to hug such a delusion, when she would never listen to any one who was not on the American side."

"Then I don't see that you need worry yourself to

make any sacrifices in another man's behalf. Let Fate decide. With me it is different. Come, we will go back to the house. I'll trust you to help me out, and I'll do the same for you, if occasion requires." With which compact, the conversation ended.

CHAPTER XII

Trouble for Sue

SO far as Fred Lyle was concerned, it soon became apparent that Jack need not consider him a rival, for he was scarce a week under the Silverthorn's roof before the young sergeant had eyes and ears for no one but Sue,—a discovery which Jack was the last one to make, and which he took triumphantly to Kate with the remark, “I say, Kate, do you know I believe Lyle's making up to Sue.”

“Do you?” Kate returned, with laughter in her eyes. “And how long since you made this wonderful discovery?”

“Oh, I've suspected it for some time, but I didn't think there was really anything in it till to-day. Look here, did you know it?”

“Did I know it? Why, of course. Anybody but a blind bat who has only eyes for a little whiffet of a girl like Marianne would see it. Grandfather is in a rage over it.”

“You don't say so!”

“Yes, and he's for getting him out of the house, neck and heels, as speedily as possible.”

"Pshaw! what's the matter with him? Of course nobody's good enough for Sue, but the fellow's a gentleman, and she might do much worse."

"Precisely, but he's not a loyalist."

"He's loyal to his own convictions and to his father's teachings." Jack was disposed to look very leniently upon this cousin of Marianne's, since he had proved beyond doubt that he did not stand in Jack's way.

"You know grandfather and his prejudices. He will get father all stirred up next. Dear me! we are all in something of a fix."

"What does Sue say?"

"Nothing."

"Does she — is she interested?"

"You know she has always declared herself more American than British, and it is very likely that she has a warm spot for the young sergeant; yet it is too early to say positively, and I don't suppose, as matters stand, that it would break her heart to part with him. Still —"

"Yes, still —"

"It is mean of grandfather to be so hard on him, as if loving Sue were a terrible crime. If he should do anything that would lead to Fred's misfortune, it would be the surest way to increase Sue's regard for the boy."

"He hasn't been talking to her about it, has he?"

"Indeed, he has, then. He tackled her in the kitchen this very morning. Sue had very little to say,—you know her way of keeping silence when she feels the most,—but I tell you the look on her face as she marched out of the room made me know that she'd cross the border if she dared."

"With Fred Lyle?"

"Yes, or without him. Grandfather has taken the wrong way to break off this affair, for I never saw Sue give Mr. Lyle such a look as she did the next time they chanced to meet."

"Well, well, well!" Jack ejaculated. "It's a sort of a mess all around. I'm good-natured, and I don't like to fuss, but I say no one has a right to dictate to girls and boys as big as we are when there is no moral question, only a difference of fool politics. Such things make a fellow stubborn; it's what drove Royal from his father's side, and it would drive me to the Yankees if grandfather were to try to force me to his way of thinking. We are all fond of old grand-dad, but he can't pull strings and make us all jump to his bidding like puppets. What does father say about all this?"

"Oh, you know father. He just laughs and jokes about it and won't see that there is any serious side."

"That's better than the other way. Well, Kate, we all have our troubles, and what has turned out one for

Sue, has relieved me of one of mine. I shall not have any duel to fight except with Victor."

"Nonsense, you'll have no duels to fight. By the way, do you expect to return to your regiment?"

"Yes, as soon as my parole is ended. There will be no fighting anyhow for some time, for us volunteers, for we have been dismissed to our homes, and the regulars have gone into winter quarters. By spring the whole affair may be settled, and I most devoutly hope it will be."

But it was not settled by spring, and in the meantime there was a parting between Sue and her lover,— a parting which no one witnessed, and of which Sue would not speak. Major Silverthorn very curtly announced to the young man that it was decided to return him to his own side with some others exchanged. "We do not usually parole regulars," said the old gentleman, "and in your case it was an exceptional favor that gave you any sort of freedom. Your exchange has been arranged, and you will leave to-morrow."

In polite terms Fred expressed his thanks for the unusual consideration shown him, but made no further comment.

Not long after this Royal took up his quarters at his grandmother's, and Marianne passes her time between the Silverthorns and the home of her grandmother, Mr. Silverthorn, in his jocose way, insisting that she was

still their prisoner, and, chaffing her about it, pretended that she could leave them only on parole, making a great fuss over it when she did. Victorine and Madame Desvouges fulfilled their promise of visiting the Silverthorns, and Kate's gentle concern for both of them quite won their hearts, so that one day the old lady, in confidence, told Kate her hopes concerning her grandchildren. "If it would but arrange itself so," she said plaintively, "I should have no compunctions about the property. Victor marries Marianne; I give him the farm; they are then both provided for. Victorine marries Royal, and brings him the dot I have saved for her. You see then this excellent plan; I provide at once for both my adopted children and my grandchildren. My daughter thinks it a plan of most excellent wisdom, and indeed I shall be desolated if it comes not about. True, you say; but would one want a deformity for a wife? I reply, but behold the angel face, the soul of such beauty, the life so pure, so unselfish that one forgets there is not perfection of body. You, for example, who have but lately met her, did she repel you? Were you shocked, abhorrent of her, my poor Victorine?"

"No, no," Kate hastened to say. "I was not. She is, as you say, beautiful, attractive, lovable."

"Ah, but that gratifies me. We are so accustomed to seeing her we forget, and I said to myself but the

other day : I will ask the young demoiselles Silverthorn if they were repelled by her, if she to them seemed impossible." She peered up into Kate's face with her bright dark eyes, and Kate felt herself grow warm under the gaze. " You are such a creature of excellent health, so robust and full of verve," Madame went on, " that you, if any one, would feel the difference ; and you do not dislike to be near this child of affliction ? "

" On the contrary, I find her a sweet, noble soul, one whom it is a privilege to know."

Madame nodded with a satisfied air. Kate hesitated, and then asked wistfully, " Your grandson, he, of course — he knows your desire in this ? "

" Mon Dieu ! no," cried the old lady. " We would be of the most unwise to tell him now. He is at the perverse age. He is young; he will get over it. We must be patient, that is all. I have made my will, and in that I have expressed myself concerning the matter."

" And Marianne ? "

" Ah, that is different. It is for a girl to have her marriage arranged for her. She has been told by both her mother and myself, that she may expect to marry Victor."

" And she accepts the arrangement ? "

" Ah, well, she is young and full of the idea of living nowhere but in her father's country; but Victor is a

good boy ; she is fond of him. What more could she ask ? When she is tired of her butterfly ways, and desires to be settled as every woman should be, she will be amiable enough. Oh, no, I have no fear for Marianne. And Victor is content ; he understands. He would not cage a wild bird and break its heart, he says ; but when it is tamed, that is different. She will not then wish to hop beyond call, he tells me. He is very patient and prudent, is Victor."

Kate kept her own counsel, but she took all this confidence to heart. Marianne, a docile French girl, accepting the arrangements made for her by mother and grandmother ? No, indeed, they would find themselves mistaken in the girl. Had she not once said : " Liberty of thought, of speech, of action, that is to me the most glorious condition of which we have to boast in our country. I am like my father in that." " And yet," sighed Kate, " that same father wanted to coerce Royal, and he had resented it, too. Neither Royal nor Marianne would submit to having their lives arranged for them, and yet it would be a wise arrangement in most directions. I don't think Marianne yet knows what love is," thought the girl. " She is still such a child ; but when she does care, it will be with all her heart. Poor Victorine, poor Sue, poor Jack ! I won't pity myself," said Kate, with a toss of the head and a compression of the lips.

And that was how matters stood all winter. If Royal made advances, Kate repelled them; if Jack one day felt that he had gained a little in Marianne's good graces, the next she gave him a flout and a fling, so that he was in the depths of despair. What Sue thought she kept to herself, but that she had something to keep was evident by the hardening of her face whenever her grandfather began a tirade against the Yankees. Major Silverthorn did not spare words upon such occasions, even when Marianne was present. Once or twice she began a protest, but the sudden bringing together of Grandfather Silverthorn's heavy eyebrows, and his high-handed methods of disposing of Marianne's remarks, sealed her lips for all future controversy. Besides, Kate had begged her not to open a discussion. "Grandfather is very bitter," she said. "He suffered a good deal at the hands of those he called rebels, and was driven from his home in the dead of winter by the Sons of Liberty. There was wrong done on both sides, Marianne, but it doesn't do any good to argue the question; and besides, it makes it much harder for Sue. We want to spare her, you know." So, for Sue's sake, as well as to prevent the irascible old man from berating Marianne herself, the girl thought discretion the better part of valor, and kept silence.

Meanwhile it was pleasant enough at her grandmother's, and to avoid Grandfather Silverthorn she stayed

away more and more, spending her time with Victorine at the loom, or helping her grandmother with her various duties, or sometimes starting off with Victor for a long walk or ride through the woods; again she might go skating with him, or dash off for a sleigh-ride. Whatever else her grandmother forbade, it was never a frolic in which Victor was concerned; and Marianne, knowing this, took advantage of it, having but to make Victor her special pleader to obtain consent for any outing. It pleased the girl well enough, too, to have him with her, for Victor was a willing slave, and allowed her to queen it over him magnificently, though sometimes he did tease her and mock her.

Royal, in spite of the fact that he considered his grandmother's house his real home, nevertheless spent most of his time at the Silverthorn's, to his grandmother's displeasure and Kate's uneasiness.

When Marianne wanted to see these girl friends, she had no trouble in finding an escort in her brother, and so seldom called upon Victor to take her. Royal was not much of a talker, except at times. He was either gay and volatile or gloomy and morose. Marianne knew enough to select a time when the lively mood was in force to prefer her requests, and was seldom refused.

He was ready enough one winter afternoon to accept her suggestion to take a sleigh-ride. "We can stop at the Silverthorn's and get the girls," Marianne proposed,

"then we'll take a little ride in the cold, and be ready with big appetites for supper."

"Very well," responded Royal, with alacrity. "We will go. Bundle up warm. We'll perhaps stop somewhere and get supper, so we'll take the big sleigh. I've no doubt that Jack will be glad to go with us."

Marianne gave a little lift of her chin. "Oh! Jack! must he always go?"

"Why not? He is a good fellow, I am sure, and jolly company; and, besides, he is my friend."

"Oh, well, of course," Marianne returned lamely. She ran up to the room she shared with Victorine and donned a fur jacket and cap, pulling the flaps of the latter well down over her ears, and was ready to start off by the time Royal had the sleigh at the door; for in spite of his grandmother's protests, he generally managed to secure her consent to the use of anything he wanted. They found Kate and Sue quite in the humor for a frolic, and Jack was nothing loath. So off they started, through the woods and over the hard snowy road; Kate snuggled down by Royal's side on the front seat, and Jack with Sue and Marianne behind these two. Marianne had insisted that Sue should occupy the middle place, and in this order they decided it.

"You are so quiet, Sue," said Marianne, when they were well started. "What is wrong?"

"Grandfather has been in one of his fierce moods

to-day," Jack explained. "Sometimes he gets too personal. I don't mind it, but Sue does and has reason to."

"I think he is a most unpleasant, tyrannical old gentleman," Marianne said, with fervor.

"And that is the reason you keep out of his way," Jack said.

"Of course. I don't intend to place myself in disagreeable company if I can avoid it. One cannot always choose one's company, but there are times when it is possible. Never mind, Sue, you and I will skip across the river some day and leave the wicked old Britishers."

"Of whom I am one, I suppose," returned Jack, a little too ready to take offence. He looked so unlike a wicked old anything, with his boyish good-humored face, that even Sue laughed.

"You are spoiling Jack's disposition," she said.

"You may be wicked, but you are not old," Marianne told him, demurely. "I should prefer that you were the latter if you could be but one."

"What if I were both, wherein could I be better?" Jack asked.

"You could cross the river and join our army," said Marianne, quickly.

"And add to my other sins that of being a traitor. You would like me to do that?"

"Well, no, I don't suppose I would, come to think of it. No, I see there is no way to improve your sad condition. You are hopelessly beyond benefiting. It is too bad that you committed yourself, or otherwise you could join our side and not be a traitor. I should like to hear you shout, 'Free trade and sailors' rights,' and see you trying to avenge the massacre of our men by your Indians." Jack compressed his lips, but said nothing. It was Marianne's habit to make these little flings, and to give him to understand that she endured him simply for the sake of his sisters and of her brother. Having accomplished her purpose in annoying him, Marianne laughed and whispered to Sue, "'Free trade and sailors' rights'; that's Cousin Fred's cry, you know." Sue made no reply except to give Marianne's hand a quick pressure.

They were approaching a comfortable farmhouse, the owners of which were ready to entertain friends at quick notice, to pop a meat pasty in the oven, to warm up a fowl already roasted, and to have a warm meal ready for whoever might need it. There seemed a little embarrassment visible as the sleighing-party entered, but as the supplies in this part of the country were getting low, the visitors attributed the confusion to this fact.

"Don't bother about a hot supper for us, Mrs. Hunter," said Royal. "A dish of porridge to warm

us will be quite as much as we expect, and more than we deserve."

"We will be able to give you something more, I hope," the good woman replied. "Will you go to the other room, girls, and lay off your things?"

"I will stay and help you," Kate said. "Here, Sue, carry in my cloak and hood." Sue hung the heavy cloak over her arm and followed Marianne into the next room.

"Just put them on the bed," Mrs. Hunter directed them.

The two girls obeyed and deposited their wraps upon the plump white bed; then they stood before the small mirror to arrange their disordered ringlets, by the dim light of a candle. The room opened upon a porch on one side, and into the kitchen on the other. There was a small closet by the chimneypiece, and the door of it stood ajar. Sue turned away from the glass. "I have an uncomfortable feeling as if some one were looking at me," she remarked. "Did you ever have that creepy feeling, Marianne?"

"I don't know. Not just that. Perhaps some one is looking in the window. It is so dark outside that we couldn't see if any one was there."

Sue gave a swift glance at the window, and drew back. Then she looked around and gave a suppressed scream. "Oh, Marianne, there is some one there in the closet. I saw the door move."

"It's only the wind. Don't be scary, Sue. You are not given to being so nervous."

"I know—but—"

"Come, I'll open the door and show you." She advanced toward the small door of the closet, but it was suddenly flung open, and a man stood before them, raising a silencing finger. "Cousin Fred!" Marianne exclaimed, in a whisper.

"Fred!" murmured Sue. "What are you doing here?"

"I was on my way to see you," he told her. "I could not stand it any longer. I may be ordered away at any moment, and the thought that I might never see you again was too much for me. The Hunters, I learned, were secretly friends to our side, and they sheltered me. I meant to try to get word to you somehow, and fortune has favored me. How can I see you for a little while without suspicion from those outside? Your brother, and yours, Marianne, would have a right; and it would be their duty to take me."

"They are calling us now," said Sue, in perturbation. And just then Kate's voice was heard at the door.

"What are you girls doing so long in there?" she inquired.

"We'll be there presently," Sue answered faintly. "Oh, what excuse can we make?" She turned to Marianne.

Immediately Marianne flung herself on the bed. "I am suddenly ill, Sue. Tell them, and you must stay here with me. I'll manage it. Go ask Mrs. Hunter if she can make me a cup of ginger tea. Go back into your hiding-place, Cousin Fred."

He stepped into the closet, and Marianne set up such a moaning and groaning as brought Kate to her side. "Poor child!" she exclaimed sympathetically, "you shouldn't have taken that long ride; it was far enough to our house without this added distance. You have taken cold, I am afraid."

"Don't let me keep you," said Marianne, in a weak voice. "Go back to Mrs. Hunter. Sue will stay with me."

Kate retired, and presently Mrs. Hunter came bustling in, all concern. Marianne sat up and whispered something to her. "I am not really ill," was what she said, "but I must make an excuse for Sue and me to remain after the others have gone. Will you mind keeping us here to-night? It is for Fred and Sue, you understand, Mrs. Hunter."

The good woman nodded assent. "Keep you? Of course, as long as you want to stay. I was young once myself, my child."

"And not so long ago," returned Marianne. "Say to them in there that I must be quiet, and that you have given me an herb drink, and if I can get to sleep I shall feel better."

"That I will do, and the herb drink will do you no harm, either. I will keep them all out and send them home in good order."

"We will settle the other matters when they have gone," Marianne decided.

Mrs. Hunter went out, carefully shutting the door behind her, and they heard her make her report according to Marianne's directions.

"I will pretend I am asleep, Sue," said Marianne, "and you can then go and eat your supper. In doing that there will be less suspicion. Then you must insist that you will stay with me and that we will return in the morning. Now go. I can't help it if it is a deceit; there is no other way." For answer Sue bent over and kissed her; and Marianne, left to herself, cuddled down in the big feather-bed, drawing a warm comfortable over her. She did not dare to speak to her cousin lest their whispered conference be overheard.

It was not long before Sue and Kate returned. "She is awake," said Kate, as Marianne opened her eyes from her feigned nap. "Are you feeling better, dear?"

"Yes," said Marianne, in a feeble tone.

"But she must not go out to-night into the cold," said Mrs. Hunter, who had followed the others into the room.

"Then I shall stay with her," Kate declared.

"No, Sue promised that she would," Marianne told her.

"Oh, well," Kate made reply, a little hurt. But Marianne drew her down and whispered:—

"Royal will be so disappointed if you do not return."

Kate shook her head, but smiled and made no further demur. So presently the depleted party drove off, and the two girls were left to themselves.

CHAPTER XIII

Runaways

AS the sleigh-bells commenced their departing jingle Marianne sprang from the bed. "Now then, they are gone!" she cried. "That I hope was an excusable deception. Come out, Cousin Fred, and tell us the rest of your story; you must be tired enough of your close corner."

The young man obeyed with alacrity, and began to tell them of the battle of Frenchtown, saying, "I suppose you have not yet heard what has befallen us in the battle on the 23d of January at Frenchtown. It is the latest news I bring and bad enough at that. At first our side was successful, but we were surprised by a combined force of British and Indians, and a most horrible massacre ensued. It makes one's blood run cold to think of it, and I will spare you details. Hundreds of brave Kentuckians, my own friends and relatives among them, were scalped and mutilated by the savages. Do you wonder that I long for revenge, and for a chance for active service?"

The girls listened, pale and horror-stricken.

"I have begged to be sent to the front," said Fred, "but before I should go, I felt that I must make an effort to see you, Sue, dear. I took my chances, for I felt that I could not go without one more word with you."

"Don't say that, after the dreadful tale you have been telling us." Sue held out her hands supplicatingly. "It will be harder than ever to sit mute and listen to grandfather's tirades against you. Oh, Fred, to think you might have been one of those to fall by the hand of those murderous Indians. How can I let you go? Pray do not try to be in the thick of it. Let fate take its course and do not court danger."

He came closer and took her hands. "You love me, Sue?"

She gave a quick glance at Marianne before she whispered, "Yes."

"Never mind my little cousin," said Fred, smiling at Marianne. "You are our good friend, Marianne, I know."

"Yes, yes," Marianne replied eagerly, "and I shall be glad, very glad, Sue, dear, to have you for my cousin."

Sue smiled faintly, then asked her lover wistfully, "Must you go back soon?"

"Yes, it was a risk to come at all, you know."

"And after you return, will you go to the front at once?"

"I cannot tell just how soon, but at all events I cannot stay here very long."

"No, I can see that, but," she put her hand on his arm, "it seems harder than ever to let you go."

"If you were but on the other side of the river, we could be together till the time came when I should be ordered away. Sue, dear heart, do you love me enough to forsake your family and to take the chances of a soldier's wife now, when it may bring you greater sorrow if I fall?"

She clung to him closely, "Oh Fred, I love you enough for anything," she whispered, "but—if I could know what is right! Would it make you happier, dear?"

"Happier! You know that, Sue; and if anything can make me fight more desperately, it will be the thought of my wife waiting my return."

"Your wife?" Sue's whisper was a half sigh.

"Yes, sweet. Shall it be so? Will you consent to it? To cross the river with me where we can best get over on the ice? Do you think your parents would receive us, Cousin Marianne? Would you—could you send with us a message to your parents, commanding Sue to their charge?"

"I? Gladly, Cousin Fred. And—yes, I know my mother will welcome Sue, and our home shall be hers while you are away."

"Good girl. Thank you, cousin. So, Sue—"

"Yes?"

"Shall we do this? And after the war we will go back to Kentucky, God willing, and I shall be proud to present my wife to my family there."

Sue smiled up at him and nodded assent, her heart too full for words. And then Mrs. Hunter came in to remind Marianne that she had had no supper, and they all went into the kitchen together.

The first dim light of dawn was stealing over the land when Sue bade Marianne a tearful good-by. "Wouldn't it be better if I were to go, too?" Marianne asked.

Sue shook her head. "No, no, I will not have any censure come to you through me. I shall have Fred, and I am not afraid. You will try to comfort Kate and be a sister to her. I would rather have you stay for that. It will not be so hard for Kate if she is not left alone; and I hope soon, soon there will be no barrier to separate us. Tell father I love him dearly as I have always done, and that I hope he will forgive me for leaving him."

So they watched her depart into the gray of the morning, confident in her love and faith, and yet with a strange longing and regret tugging at her heart.

Of course there was a scene at the Silverthorns when the news of Sue's flight was brought them. It was

Royal who spared his little sister the pain of telling it. "I can stand the Major's explosions of wrath," he insisted. "You can tell Kate if you like, and I will face the others."

"My poor Sue," said Kate, the tears gathering in her eyes; "it seems so pitiful that she must go without one of us to wish her happiness. Oh, I hope she will be happy; but I shall miss her so, and I cannot quite forgive Fred for being willing to have her leave us all without a word." She put her head down on Marianne's shoulder and wept softly. Presently she wiped away her tears. "I must go to father," she said. "He is the one who needs me."

Marianne wisely stayed behind, and Royal slipped from the room when Kate appeared. Major Silverthorn was storming up and down the floor, uttering all manner of execrations. Kate paid no heed to him, but went directly to her father, who gathered her into his arms. The humorous twinkle was gone from his eye, and his mouth was gravely set. "You are not angry, too, father?" Kate whispered.

"Angry with my girl? No." He shook his head. "She had no mother to teach her patience and prudence, my poor little Sue. She is not to blame."

"And you will forgive her when she comes back?"

"Forgive her? There's nothing to forgive. I am to blame myself. I should not have treated it all so

lightly. It was no joke to her, poor child. While she was eating her heart out with fear and anxiety, I laughed at her." He drew his hand across his eyes.

Kate clung closer to him and would not have him blame himself, rather counting herself at fault. And so they comforted each other, and no one felt harshly toward poor Sue except the inflexible major. Jack heard the news gravely. It was Kate who told him, and he had no comment to make but, "Poor Sue, I hope she will be happy. Fred is a good fellow if he does belong to the other side, though I think he was wrong to steal our sister away."

But soon there was little time to consider anything but near and immediate dangers. As the spring opened, hostilities were renewed.

The invasion of Canada was still the object of the Americans. Their regular force was now nearly sixty thousand, while that of Sir George Prevost, governor of Canada, was comparatively small. Up to this time neither side had displayed very excellent tactics, and the border country, except in special localities, had not suffered greatly. But the day of terror was near. The employment of Indian allies was sufficient fact to determine a season of horrible warfare, and the more timid were trembling at the possibilities in store for them.

In February Sir George Prevost directed an attack against Ogdensburg, capturing the American stores

and artillery. It was considered so great a victory that a message was sent to the commanding officer of Fort Niagara, informing him that a salute would be fired from Fort George in honor of the affair. The American officer sent a return message to the effect that he was gratified to be able to return the compliment, as he intended to fire a salute from his fort at the same time, having just received news of a brilliant naval victory: that of the *Peacock* over the British frigate *Java*. Probably no one enjoyed the humor of this more than Mr. Silverthorn, and he laughed with Marianne over the Yankee wit of Colonel McFeely.

With the disappearance of the ice from the streams and the lakes the military movements were started, and then Marianne's grandmother clamored for her to remain with her altogether. "I shall not have a moment's peace," the old lady declared, "with both you and Royal in the midst of danger."

"But shall I be any safer here?" Marianne asked.

"Surely, yes. Monsieur Silverthorn has chosen a most isolated habitation, and who could ever discover if a horde of savages were suddenly to descend upon you all there?"

"But it does not seem right to desert Kate."

"And what is to prevent the coming of Mademoiselle Kate, too?"

But to this Kate would not listen. "It is right for

you to go to your grandmother's," she decided, "for families should keep together if they can at such times, and for that reason I must stay here where father and Jack can come if they need me."

"But if danger seems nearer you than us, you will come?" said Marianne.

"If I can. You must not worry about me. We are so far out of the way that for that very reason we shall probably be safer than those nearer the village and the high road."

So Marianne left her reluctantly, and arrived at her grandmother's to hear them all talking of the attack upon York. General Pike had been killed, and it was reported that the American fleet was coming down the lake. Then came the positive information that General Dearborn had evacuated York and was making for the Niagara country.

"There will be trouble for us now," said Victor, who brought the news. And it was not long before the first booming of the great guns from the batteries on both sides the river told them that the trouble had begun. The thunders of the cannons were silenced by night, but began again the next morning. Except for the constant booming, it was quiet enough at the Desvouges farm, but there was confusion enough beyond,—troops marching, fighting, shouting; flags waving, drums beating, fifes shrilly playing. From time to time one or

another of these sounds came faintly to the ears of the family. By noon Fort George had been surrendered, and by night all was quiet. The Niagara frontier was abandoned by the British.

"My father! My father! I shall see him soon," Marianne cried delightedly.

"I would not count upon it too surely," her grandmother warned her.

"But why? He will surely come. He must have been there with his regiment."

"Yes, but this is war, my child. It does not mean that there are none slain, nor wounded."

"Oh!" Marianne had not for a moment considered such a possibility, since her friends were the victors. She grew suddenly pale. "Do you think he is killed, grand'mère?" she asked, in an awed tone.

"Tut, tut, my child, I did not say so. I but warned you not to be too confident of seeing him. The fortunes of war are so very uncertain."

But the girl did not hear her. She had sprung to her feet. "He is coming now! I hear him! I see him!" she cried. "Father! Father!" She sprang to the door to meet him, indeed, upon the very sill, hale and hearty and weather-beaten.

"You have come! You have come!" cried Marianne, catching him around the neck and receiving a mighty embrace.

"Come, sure enough; and not alone, either," replied her father with a laugh. "This time there are plenty to keep me in countenance."

"It is true, then; we have taken Fort George?"

"Yes, and five hundred prisoners."

"Good!" But a sudden thought sobered her. "Do you suppose that Royal and the Silverthorns are among them?" she asked gravely.

Her father's smile faded. "I do not know. We shall see." Then he brightened again. "You are on our soil to-night, daughter."

"So I am, and long enough have I been off it. Now do tell me the news, father. Mother and Jerusha are well?"

"Yes, but anxious to see you. Let me have a word with your grandmother, and then I will tell you all that you are so ready to hear." He turned to Madame Desvouges and chatted with her while Marianne waited impatiently her turn. A long sigh drew her grandmother's attention to the wistful face. She laughed. "I see I shall be considered an old one most tiresome, if I do not give way to this questioner. We shall have to send her to bed very early in order to converse."

"I do want to hear about Sue," said Marianne, eagerly.

"She is still with your mother, and a great comfort to her in your absence. Naughty little Marianne, you

let her steal a march on you. I had looked to see you in her place."

Marianne laughed. "Cousin Fred could not wait for me, it seems, for I have no mind to marry yet, and I am very well content to have Sue for a cousin. Isn't she a fine girl?"

"She is, and Fred is a fine fellow."

"They ought to be very happy, then, and I suppose they are. Is Fred with you? Was he in the battle to-day?"

"Yes, and came out of it safe and sound. To-morrow you shall see him, and your mother, too, I hope."

"Here?"

"Or at our own home."

"No, here," interrupted Madame Desvouges, "and then we shall all have the pleasure. I protest at breaking up a family again."

"We must get Kate, and — oh, but it will be fine to have every one safe, and to feel that one does not have to hide and contrive and beware of enemies at every turn. Grand'mère forgives you for making her an American, I know she does. Yes, grand'mère, this is American soil now, and you cannot do or say anything against any of us or you will be made a prisoner as I make you one now." She encircled the old lady's waist with her arms and would not let her go.

"To-morrow, Victor," said Madame, "you will go

and bring my daughter and her friend home. Do not forget to start early."

"And we will go and get Kate, and have a grand family reunion. Will it not be fine, Victorine?"

Victorine smiled sadly. Her thoughts flew to Royal. Was he this night wounded, a prisoner, or dead? "Your brother, too, should be here to make it complete," she said.

"True," Marianne sighed. "I hope he is safe. I forgot that one can never be completely happy; there is always a thorn somewhere." But where Royal was at that moment they little knew.

CHAPTER XIV

Kate and Royal

THE hearthstone of the Silverthorns was cold. Before it sat Kate, with her throbbing head between her hands. Up and down the country had been raging the conflicting armies. Her father, her grandfather, Jack, Royal, had gone forth to battle, but not one had returned to her. Where were they? She shivered, though the mild May evening brought little chill in it. Her supper was forgotten. The day had passed like a nightmare; and now at evening, with the triumphing Americans in possession, she felt deserted, lonely, despairing. If but one of her friends would come and bring her news; if but one would return to comfort her! In a dull way she felt that she must not leave her post lest she be needed. "But how foolish! how foolish!" she said aloud. "They cannot come back into the enemy's country; it isn't their country any more."

She aroused herself wearily, and went to the door. The peace of evening was over the landscape. Bloody

scenes of revenge and warfare seemed far enough away, but the loveliness of the view only brought tears to the girl's eyes, and she went inside again, sitting dejectedly down at the table and resting her head upon her arms.

The daylight faded, and as darkness came on from out of the stillness of the night some one stealthily approached, stood for a moment listening, then pushed open the door. Kate, hearing the sound, sprang to her feet and held out two trembling hands. "Royal!" she cried, "Royal!" There was such longing and relief in her tones that he gathered her to his heart without a question.

"My poor lonely darling, my poor little Kate! Why have you stayed here by yourself? It was not safe, Kate." He laid her head against his breast, and kissed her white forehead.

"But you?" she asked. "Is it safe for you?"

"Safe enough. It is quiet now."

"My father, and Jack, and grandfather—what of them?"

He was silent a moment before answering. "Jack and Major Silverthorn are prisoners. Your father—" he paused again, and held her closer. "Can you bear to hear it, dearest?"

"Yes, yes," she whispered, clinging to him.

"He was mortally wounded. We took him to a

house not far from here. We will lay him to rest in the morning."

Kate broke away from him and stretched out helpless hands. "Where is my comfort?" she moaned. "I am all alone, all alone."

Royal took the cold hands in his. "Dearest Kate, I told your father I would take care of you. You will let me, Kate?"

She gazed at him with wide unseeing eyes. "No, no!" She made a gesture which sent him back a step, and her head moved painfully from side to side.

To see her suffering was more than Royal could bear, and he came to her side again and possessed himself of her hand. "Do you mean that you do not love me, Kate?" he asked, in a low, troubled tone. She was silent, but kept her face turned from him and covered by her free hand. "You know, Kate dearest, you must know that I love you, that I have loved you from the first. It does not seem a time to speak of it, but—I thought to-night—when I came in, that you loved me, too. And you do not, Kate?"

"I must not," she replied, still sobbing.

"It does not seem a time to speak of it," Royal repeated, "but your father was so troubled for you, and I told him I would cherish you, love you, care for

you, if you would be my wife, Kate; and he was glad, and told me to give you his blessing. If you do not love me, Kate, I will not worry you again."

She turned her sad eyes upon him. "I must not," she repeated.

"You will tell me why? Why must you not? Have I a right to know?"

"Victorine," she said faintly. "It is to her you should tell your love."

"Victorine? I have told her of my love."

Kate looked at him wildly. Her mouth twitched, and she asked in a hysterical gasp, "Then why? then why?" She turned from him and sat down on the doorstep, sobbing again in a pitiful, helpless way.

Royal looked at her in a sort of wonder, then he sat down by her side. "I have told her, Kate. I told her long ago. She is the only one who knows about it; and she said she would love you, too, and if anything happened to me, she promised that she would be to you as a sister. You see—you know how things are at home; I could not tell them there, and so I told Victorine. I have always gone to her with my secrets ever since we were children together, and so it was natural that I should give her my confidence. Do you care that I did? that she knew it before I told you? Poor little heart, I should not disturb you

with this; but I did hope—I thought—your father thought, that perhaps I could bring you a little comfort."

Then Kate turned to him with a sigh and laid her hand in his. "You do comfort me, Royal. No one else could bring me a gleam of light in this dark hour; no one but you."

"And you will let me carry out your father's wish? I will tell you, my dearest: when he was wounded, and we found how serious it was, we took him to one side, and after a little were able to bear him to a farmhouse near by. His great concern was for you and Sue, and I felt that I ought to tell him of my feeling for you, and that I thought perhaps you might care a little; and he was pleased. He said he would give you to me if you were willing, and he asked me to come at once and tell you so. He wanted so to see you before he should go, but we knew it would be too late by the time you could reach him, and it seemed to comfort him to have me stay by his side to the last. He wished—he asked that there should be no delay in our right to belong to each other. He asked that I would take you for my wife before we gave him our last farewell." He paused for Kate's answer, but she made none.

"I would have told you long ago," he went on; "but sometimes you were so cold and seemed to shun

me, and I felt that you did not want to hear what I had to tell. I was afraid you did not care."

"I cared always," Kate spoke very quietly now, "but I thought I understood that you were to marry Victorine, and it seemed a natural arrangement—"

"Victorine? Why, I never thought of her as a wife; as a saint, an angel, so pure and holy, but—" He shook his head. "As I told you, she has always been my confidante, my counsellor. I have never spoken of love to her, except of my love to you, and she has encouraged me and urged me not to give you up; she has assured me that I might hope to win you, has given me courage, and confidence, and hope, as a sweet sister might do. She bade me tell you, if ever I did win your love, that if you could consent to make me happy, that she would feel that you conferred a happiness upon her, and that it would be for her happiness as well as mine."

"She said that?"

"Yes. You believe it?"

"I believe you."

"And you will not send me away from you?"

"No. But can I go to him?" she asked wistfully.

"Yes. You must not stay here alone. We will go together. They are expecting us. You will try to sleep to-night. You can be sure that it is I who am watching."

They walked away into the spring night, following a beaten path across fields till a white farmhouse gleamed out of the dim green, and into this they passed, Kate's joy swallowed up in her great grief.

It was a solemn little company that stood in the presence of death to witness the entering upon a new life of Royal and Kate; and the clergyman who united the two turned from the marriage service to that for the burial of the dead. Friend and foe alike stood by the grave to do honor to the soldier, Robert Silverthorn.

It was General Porter himself who offered Royal his hand when giving him his parole, though shaking his head and saying, "I didn't expect to see the son of my friend Walter Reyburn in this plight." Yet he wished him happiness, and told him he was fortunate in winning such a bride.

It was afternoon of the same day that Royal and Kate, sitting in front of the Silverthorns' house, saw two figures ride up, and described Victor and Marianne to be the riders. Marianne was off her horse in a twinkling. "Royal is here!" she cried. "We have been so anxious about him. Why didn't you come and report your safety, you bad child?"

Her brother looked at Kate. "I had other things to do." He took Kate's hand in his. "This is my wife, Marianne. Come and give her a sisterly greeting."

Marianne stood stock still in astonishment for a second, then she ran forward and clasped Kate in her arms. "Dear Kate, I am so glad." She held her off at arm's length. "Tell me all about it. I think you were very, very unkind not to ask me to be present, and not to let me know long ago that you meant to marry my brother. But you look so sad. What has happened?"

Kate's eyes filled, and Marianne looked at her brother for explanation. "Kate is fatherless," he said, in a low tone.

Instantly Marianne's arms were again about the girl. "Dear Kate, dear Kate. Ah, how sad! I see; that is why you married so quietly. You must let us comfort you, for now you have our father and mother for yours." She paused, for she wondered if this step of Royal's would further estrange his father. "I came over on purpose to have you go back with me. Sue and mother are both at grandmother's. Sue would have come with me, but I was ready to start off as soon as she arrived, and so we thought it best not to wait. And now that we have Royal safe, it will make the meeting of the family that much more complete."

At this moment Victor, who had been tying the horses, came up, and Marianne pounced upon him, crying: "Victor, what do you think? They are mar-

ried, these two. Is it not a surprise, and with Sue at the house, is it not fortunate?" Then she remembered the sad news of which Sue had yet to be told, and she was silent. Royal beckoned Victor aside, and Marianne sat down by Kate to hear all that she had to tell.

An hour or two later the expectant company at Madame Desvouges's were startled by Marianne's announcement: "Here we are, mother. Royal we have found, and Kate, too; and what do you think? It is no more Kate Silverthorn, but Kate Reyburn. She is Royal's wife."

But Kate had flown to Sue, and was clasped in her sister's arms. "Sue, Sue," sobbed she, "he is gone from us forever; our dear father we shall never see more on earth. And, oh, Sue, it is all so sad! my wedding-day, and such a grief to carry!" The two sisters did not hear nor heed the consternation which Marianne's announcement had made.

"Mon Dieu!" cried Madame Desvouges. "Ungrateful boy, do not come here with a wife. A wife, indeed! And what right have you to take a wife without your parents' consent? I will not have it. Victorine, where are you? Do you hear, Victorine? The ungrateful has a wife. Ah, I am an old woman to be thus ignored, set aside. He should have consulted me, me; and I would have told him the impossibility of it. No, no, take her

away. I will not welcome her. Where is my daughter? Take me to my room."

Victorine, as pale as a ghost, stepped between the uplifted hands that would seem to drive away Royal. There was the smile of a martyr upon the girl's face as she held out both hands to the young man. "Bring your wife to me, Royal," she said, "that I may wish her the joy she deserves, and that I may share her sorrow. I am glad, glad of your happiness; I have prayed for it night and day." Royal stooped to kiss her, and with a little quivering indrawing of her breath she turned her cheek to him and received his caress silently. Then she sought Kate, sitting with Sue in one corner, and after giving her gentle words of greeting and of sympathy, Victorine slipped from the room, and they saw her no more.

Marianne followed her mother, who had led the tottering steps of the old lady from the room. "You will be good to Kate, even if grand'mère is not," Marianne urged. "Think, mother, her father died but yesterday; and what a sad wedding-day for her! We should not make it more sad. And Royal has long loved her, and you know yourself how dear and lovely a girl she is. If you will give her a loving welcome, it will make both of your children happy after this long parting." And though Mrs. Reyburn's own disappointment was great, she had the wisdom to see that

the fault was neither Royal's nor Kate's, but that it lay within themselves, who had set their hearts upon a thing that could not be brought about.

So she followed her daughter, Madame Desvouges shrieking after them: "Do not bring her to me. I will not receive her. I will not have her under my roof. I will not come from my room till she leaves the house."

The shrill voice reached Kate's ears this time, and she turned white and then red, shrinking back when Mrs. Reyburn appeared.

"You must not mind my mother," said that good woman. "She is old, and cannot understand that these children of mine are grown up and are old enough to decide some matters for themselves. You have had a great sorrow, my daughter, and I hope you believe that you have all our sympathy. I am very glad Royal has not brought us a stranger, but some one whom we already know and love."

This was very sweet for Kate to hear, but she could not forget those piercing tones, declaring Madame Desvouges's disappointment. She felt ill at ease while she remained in the house.

His grandmother's attitude had the effect of antagonizing Royal, and he strode off to her room, insisting that she should hear him, and declaring that he had never asked any one to receive his wife, and that they were sufficient for each other.

"You talk of my defying you, grand'mère, of my disobedience, when you have never forbidden me to marry. It was but the other day you encouraged me to consider it, saying that it was high time I was looking out for a wife. I don't understand this opposition, and I shall not subject my wife to any such treatment. You need not fear that we will remain. Of all times, to treat her unjustly when she has become orphaned and has none to look to but to us. I expected more gentleness from my grandmother, who has always treated me so tenderly."

He did not wait for a reply, but slammed the door after him, and left her in tears. Yet he was somewhat mollified by his mother's gentle acceptance of this new daughter, and by Marianne's evident happiness in having Kate for a sister.

"I have always wanted a sister," she told Kate, "and I would choose you above any one."

"Not above Victorine," Kate added.

"Well, that is different. I love her dearly, of course, but she is older and does not seem the companion that you do. I must tell Sue that mother wants her to feel that she can return home with us to-morrow, and that she must not leave till she goes to Kentucky with her husband."

"But she is going home with me," Kate told her. "We will be happier so. She is heart-broken at having

gone away without a word of farewell to father, and reproaches herself for acting in such haste."

"But she has been very happy with Fred."

"Yes, and father was content that she should have gone. He sent her such loving messages, but all the more she reproaches herself. Royal has tried to comfort her by telling her that father sent word that she must not fret, for he did not blame her, and that he had never forbidden her to marry. He said he loved her not one bit the less. It was so like father to think of her and not of himself. He had such a great loving heart that he was always readier to excuse than to blame." The tears fell from Kate's eyes, and Marianne put her arms around her.

"I know," she said. "I know how hard it must be, but he would be glad if he could see you and Sue here together, and could know that each has the love of the man who of all others is dearest to her."

"Yes," sighed Kate, "that is one comfort; and another is that all of you but your grandmother have been so good to me. I hope some day even Madame Desvouges will be reconciled. It is very hard for old people to give up, and I know she had other plans for Royal."

"Yes, I know what you mean," Marianne returned, thoughtfully, "but that never could have been. I

know it, Kate, and you mustn't let that trouble you."

That Sue would go back to their old home with her, that Marianne was pleased, that Victorine had welcomed her, and that Mrs. Reyburn had received her as a daughter, was indeed Kate's comfort; and she felt that, sadly as she must always remember her wedding-day, that she could also gather from it memories of much sympathy, consideration, and affection.

Mr. Reyburn had not appeared; he was busy with his military duties. Fred had been able to join them, and Kate felt in the face of the displeasure shown upon her account, that she could have a fellow-feeling for her brother-in-law, who, after all, had erred, but because of his love for Sue. He was so brotherly, so sympathetic, so concerned for her, that she could not have the heart to show him ill-will; and when he professed himself glad that Sue wanted to stay with her sister in the old home, Kate lost all feeling of resentment.

When told of this new exhibition of independence on the part of his son, Captain Reyburn at first made no comment; then he remarked, "He might have done worse." He had always liked Kate, and the fact that Sue had been for all these months an inmate of his house, increased his feeling of friendliness for

her sister. He met Kate and Sue on the road one day and stopped them. "When this war is over I hope we shall see something of each other," he said. "My son has not asked my congratulations upon his new possession, but he has them just the same." He bowed and passed on, and Kate looked at Sue. "Well, what do you think of that?" she asked.

"I think," said Sue, "that you may be the bond that is needed to unite those two."

"I hope so," said Kate, fervently.

CHAPTER XV

Home No More

THROUGHOUT the summer there were exciting times along the lake country. The affairs of Stony Creek and Beaver Dams were the ones most affecting the inhabitants of the Niagara frontier, while lesser skirmishes and conflicts did not give time for much respite from anxiety. Kate and Sue remained quietly at home. Royal, being still under parole and allowed to remain with them, could be on hand to look after matters requiring a man's attention, while Fred was stationed near by with the troops at Fort George.

Marianne and her mother had returned to their home across the river, and with Jerusha and Mark managed affairs, but lived in a state of dread and anxiety for the safety of their friends of both sides. Captain Reyburn was constantly on duty, and although after the unfortunate issue of the fight in the Beechwoods the American troops did not make many ventures, there was a feeling of uncertainty and apprehension about, which served to make this a

most uncomfortable time. Jerusha, however, was never in better spirits. There was occasion for the display of her best efforts at cheerfulness, and her depression decreased in proportion to the greatness of the reverses reported.

"I don't believe you care one bit for our success," Marianne complained. "You are so disagreeably cheerful, Jerusha. One would think it was a wedding you were talking about, instead of a battle."

"A weddin'," sniffed Jerusha. "I guess I'd be sorry enough to see any poor misguided woman throw herself away on any man, let alone myself. Thank goodness, I'm beyond any hopes or fears of marriage."

"You'd better not be too sure," returned Marianne. "There's Asa Peaslee, if he ever comes back. I heard him say you were 'a fine figger of a woman.' You don't know what may be in store for you."

"As if I'd look twice at that little weazly-faced crittur," Jerusha scoffed.

"I'm sure I caught you making eyes at him," Marianne continued, bent upon teasing.

"Me make eyes at that poor little atomy! I can put my eyes to better use, and my ears, too. I don't give no heed to the maunderin' of that runt of a pedler. I kin tell you a tale worth two of yours. I heard that Mis' Secord across the river carried the

word to them Britishers, and they was on the look-out for Colonel Boerstle and his men. She walked through the woods for miles to get FitzGibbons the information. Now, I call that brave, if she is an enemy."

"Yes, it was brave enough, but plenty of our women were as brave and braver in the Revolution. I'd do the same if I had a chance, and so would you. The reason why they make such a fuss over it, is because it isn't usual for their women to show so much spunk, while ours are always doing such things." Marianne was not disposed to give Mrs. Secord any too much credit.

"Mebbe that's so, but 'tain't no good to try to belittle her, if it is so. They've had a bad fight. Your pa wa'n't in it, I'm glad to say."

"No, he wasn't there, but I don't know about Royal. He expected to be exchanged by this time."

"What about that boy Jack? You ain't seen him this good bit?"

"No, nor heard of him."

"He's kind of relation of yourn, now your brother's married his sister. Jack is a good sort of boy, if he is a miserable Britisher."

Marianne was silent. She had many things to think of these days. She wondered how it would be when the war was over; how she would settle

her own life. She thought of Sue and Kate and Victorine and Victor. She was well aware of her grandmother's anxiety to see her the wife of Victor, but she felt that there was quite time enough, besides — She gave her head an impatient jerk, and arose from where she had been sitting lost in thought. "Father wants us to go to Uncle Tom's," she announced. "He said it is farther inland, and we'll be safer there beyond the Genesee, but I don't want to go, and mother says she will not desert her people."

"She's right," agreed Jerusha. "I wouldn't go either, if any of my folks was in danger."

"Then you think we really are in danger?"

"There's no doubt of that at any time. If it ain't the terror that flieh by night, it is the noisome pestilence."

Even then the danger was, indeed, near. The disturbing summer passed away, and before the close of the year the Americans were ready to withdraw their troops from Fort George. The common occurrences of war had given the inhabitants in the country around a sad year. Whichever side they might favor, they were, nevertheless, sufferers from foraging parties and from the lawless marauders who demolished houses, drove off the cattle, and played havoc generally.

"There's dreadful goings on at the other side of

the river," said Jerusha, coming in one morning in early December. "I hope I'm a good American, but I must say I don't uphold the 'abomination of desolation.' I suppose 'nation must war against nation and kingdom against kingdom.' The Bible says so. 'And there shall be fearful sights, and signs there shall be from heaven,' and I say, 'Let them that are in Judea flee to the mountain.'"

"What are you talking about, Jerusha?" Marianne asked, as Jerusha set down a plate of hot cakes upon the table.

"I'm talkin' about the burning of Newark. I suppose you have not heard that they've turned out men, women, and children, the young and the old, into the cold, and have burnt the town. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,' but we'll get it here, I'm afraid. If them Britishers and Injuns is let loose on us, then look out."

"Oh, dear, dear," said Marianne, setting down her cup of coffee, "you are so alarming, Jerusha. Just think of the splendid victories on the lakes and the ocean. Our own Captain Perry, whom father knows so well—just think of that good whipping he gave the British. I like his message, 'We have met the enemy and they are ours.' And think, too, of General Harrison having Malden and Detroit, and of Tecumseh's being killed, and of all those prisoners

we have. I think it looks very promising, and I don't see what we need to be afraid of."

"You wait and see," returned Jerusha. "There shall be signs from heaven, and the sun set blood red last night, and I dreamed that the stars were blood red too, and descended in a shower upon us. If that ain't a sign, I don't know what is; and one easy enough to read. The redcoats will descend upon us, and the redskins will follow."

"Nonsense, Jerusha," Mrs. Reyburn spoke up, sharply, "don't scare the child to death. It is true these are evil days, but the sufferers are our friends across the river, and not ourselves. I pray God my mother and her family are safe."

"Fort George is evacuated, I'm told," said Jerusha, "and I suppose that takes Mis' Lyle's husband from her."

"And if Royal is away at Burlington, where he expected to go, Kate and Sue are all alone. Dear, dear, I hope they will not be harmed."

"I hope Royal will be allowed to stay. He has friends on his father's side, and has received much consideration from that fact. Then his brother-in-law is in the American army, and has, so far, been able to use his influence; so it may be that he has not gone."

"Perhaps the farmhouses have been left, even if they have burned the town," Marianne said hopefully.

Jerusha shook her head. "There's scarce a farmhouse left, they say. I'm surprised Mis' Desvouges has hers, but I guess it's because she has friends to protect it. All I say is that when our hour will come, no man knoweth. I think, Mis' Reyburn, that we'd ought to be goin' somewheres else."

"It would not be any safer at mother's," she replied. "I think we will stay here for the present, Jerusha, and run our chances with our neighbors."

It was very cold, and snow had already begun to fall. "It is pitiful to think of those poor, homeless people turned out at this time of year," said Marianne, looking out of the window, about a week later. "Ah, mother dear, I am less light-hearted than I was a year ago, when we had our husking-bee. I had hardly begun to realize then how terrible war can be. I pray you, Jerusha, don't dream of red stars again to-night."

Whatever Jerusha's dreams might have been, the next morning brought danger to their very doors. The distant noise of firing came to them at day-break. A single cannon shot fired from Fort Niagara at five o'clock was a portentous sound. It meant that on, on were coming the vengeful invaders. Down the road to Lewiston they advanced, ransacking and burning every house in sight.

Marianne awakened to a day of terror; for, before

the inmates of the house had time to realize their imminent peril, a yelling, hooting, shrieking horde of Indians were approaching the house, and the British soldiers, scarcely less eager, were bent upon destroying everything in their path. Fort Niagara, with its valuable stores, was taken, the savages were let loose, and death and destruction faced the inhabitants of the quiet villages upon the east shore of the river.

At the first sight of the enemy, Mrs. Reyburn shrieked to her daughter: "They come! The Indians! Run for your life! Marianne! Marianne! Where are you, Jerusha? We must escape while we can!"

"Must we leave our home to be destroyed?" cried Marianne, wringing her hands. "Can we save nothing, mother?"

"Nothing but our lives; and we'll be lucky if we get off with those," Jerusha told her, grimly. "I saw Mark legging it up the road as soon as the gun was fired. There's not a minute to be lost, Mary Ann. You've got to come along. Get something warm as quick as you can, and come."

"Where?"

"Don't ask me where," said Jerusha. "Anywhere we can git."

Trembling in every limb, Marianne clad herself as warmly as possible in the time given her; and with a hastily prepared bundle of provisions which Jerusha

scrambled together, they set out, running till they were breathless, across fields and over stones and drifts of snow. Suddenly Mrs. Reyburn slipped and fell, giving a moan of pain when she attempted to rise. "I am afraid I have either twisted my ankle or broken a bone," she said. "Go on, go on, I pray you! Don't wait for me, I beg of you!"

Jerusha came to a halt, and looked down at the little woman whose face was drawn with pain. Marianne was down on her knees in an instant. "Leave you, dearest mother? Not while I live. If we must die, we will die together."

"Go on, go on!" begged Mrs. Reyburn. "My child, my child, I cannot see you die!"

Jerusha's gaunt form straightened itself up. "I guess I kin lug you," she said briefly. And picking Mrs. Reyburn up in her arms, she strode on, Marianne by her side. Mrs. Reyburn's face was bravely set, and she begged them to leave her, for they were now not able to make very good speed, and a running, leaping, howling band of Indians gained upon them at every step. These were followed closely by a company of soldiers.

The house had already been looted, and the torch applied: it was now bursting into flames, and in the red firelight the howling savages danced and yelled. Nearer and nearer came the pursuers. Now they

could see the painted faces, now the gleam of the tomahawks.

But not so fast did they run but the men behind kept up with them; and they had scarce touched their victims, before a young soldier made a great leap, and placed himself in front of the fugitives. "Stop!" he cried. "Not a hair of their heads shall be hurt! Come, boys, help me to protect these ladies; they are friends."

The sudden halt gave the white men time to rally to the side of the young man, who valiantly stood his ground. But the cold hand of an Indian had already clutched Marianne's brown locks, and she had been dragged some distance off, where she lay face down, momentarily expecting that the death-blow would be given her. Indeed, the keen-bladed knife was already uplifted to do its frightful work, when it was sent spinning into the snow, and, with a savage grunt, the Indian sprang to recover it. Fear and horror had already sent Marianne into a state of blessed oblivion; and she was scarcely conscious, when, seeing the danger they would both be in from the enraged savage, frustrated in his bloody design, the young soldier seized the girl in his arms, and ran with all his speed away from the spot. Seeing his design, his friends fell upon the Indian and secured him.

Jerusha, with determined front, faced the soldiers.

Mrs. Reyburn weakly begged to be put down. "Let them kill me, Jerusha," she whispered, "and you may still be able to escape."

Jerusha gave a sardonic laugh. "I'd look pretty trying to escape," she said. "I kin jump pretty high, but I guess I couldn't clear the heads of twenty men."

At the sound of her voice there was a movement in the company, and a man stepped wonderingly forward. "Jerushe!" he exclaimed, "it is thou!"

Jerusha almost dropped her burden in her surprise. "I guess it is me, Jooly Fooshay," she replied.

"You have, then, not forgot me. Gentlemen, I present my wife."

Jerusha stood imperturbably staring at the laughing soldiers, who thought this a good joke.

"I have ze plaisir to save thy life, my Jerushe," said the man, smiling.

"I guess I'm not under such special obligation for that," returned Jerusha. "I don't know as I'm particular about it, if I've got to pass the rest of it with you."

Her sharp repartee entertained the listeners, and they began to applaud her and to jeer at their comrade, who took it all good-naturedly, saying: "All same, it is ze wife of me; I am lose her zis long time. I am now ask you to accompany us to ze

garrison. See you, my friends, to ze lady she has in charge. I myself will accompany my wife." Two soldiers volunteered to carry Mrs. Reyburn, and Jerusha stalked silently along by the side of her newly found husband. Finding themselves deprived of any trophies in this direction, the Indians took another way, and the little company proceeded to the fort.

Marianne, meanwhile, was very quickly borne along in a pair of stalwart arms. She was conscious of the fact that her life had been spared, but to what purpose she felt dimly uncertain. The soldier held her as he would a baby, and she lay with closed eyes, feeling helplessly indignant as she grew to a better consciousness of her plight. It was useless to resist. Any effort to struggle might bring worse trouble upon her, and she concluded to lie quietly. She could only pray that her mother and Jerusha had been saved, and that she might be allowed to plead for her own life.

The smoke of the burning of her home came to her nostrils, and she lifted her head to see what was to fill her with distress, and yet which was to possess her with a strange fascination. "Don't look, Marianne," said her rescuer, tenderly. "I thought you had fainted, poor little girl." And Marianne for the first time was aware who it was who held her.

"Jack," she said faintly. "Oh, Jack." The relief was so great that she began to sob, great tearless, heart-breaking gasps.

"Poor little girl, dear little Marianne," said Jack. "You are safe; don't do so."

"I—I—can't help it," she gasped.

"Well, if it does you any good, cry all you please. I am glad you can. I think we are safe now. We are coming to the woods, and I will put you down." He set her gently on the ground as he would a child. He was evidently much unstrung himself and stood for a minute looking at the trembling little figure.

Marianne gradually recovered herself. "You have saved my life," she said. "Oh, Jack, to think in God's mercy it should have been you. I am thankful. I have not words to say how thankful."

Jack's voice shook as he replied: "So am I. My God, Marianne, when I think of that moment when I saw you in the hands of that horrible painted savage and feared I was too late—I feel I cannot say how thankful that I determined to follow the party. I had a deadly fear that you might not have been warned, and I was determined to save you if I could. I have little taste for such horrors as we have witnessed this morning. I want you to believe that I did not come out to distress innocent women and children."

"I know that," said Marianne, simply. "But mother and Jerusha? Did you see? Do you think they are safe?"

"They are, I feel sure. There were enough of my friends to see to it that they were freed. But it is too cold for you to stand here. Shall I carry you again, or would you rather walk? I think there must be a shelter somewhere."

"There is a little cabin two or three miles away in the woods; it is very lonely there, and no one would be likely to find it, unless he knew just where to look for it. Some people live there, a hunter and his wife. Unless the place has been discovered and burned, I think they will take me in. It is in that direction," she indicated by a wave of the hand. "It is in such a lonely spot that I hope it has been overlooked."

"I think it more than probable. Shall we go? I think it might be better than if you were to try to get to the garrison, for we may come across another band of Indians; and one man against a number, especially when they are on the war-path, has not much chance, even though he be a friend. They might not hurt me, but would perhaps harm you."

Marianne shuddered and turned so pale that Jack hastened to reassure her that she was safe. "You have nothing on your head, and it is so cold." He

drew a handkerchief from his pocket and tied it under her chin. The sight of her pale face and fear-stricken eyes nearly unnerved him, but he strove to distract her thoughts by harking back to the days of their first acquaintance, and they managed to keep up a desultory talk upon indifferent subjects until at last the little cabin was discerned; but upon reaching it they found it deserted. The family had taken alarm and had fled with so many of their neighbors that long processions were formed upon the roads west of the Genesee.

In spite of the empty house Jack's cheerfulness and his quality of making the best of things asserted themselves. "It's much better than being out of doors," he said. "I will make a fire and see if they have left us anything to eat. After that we will find out what is to be done next."

The place was neat and clean, and the family in their flight had taken only their clothing and their most necessary articles, so these later comers found sufficient for their needs. A cracked cup, an iron skillet, a pewter spoon, and a few such things stood upon a shelf in the cupboard depleted of all provisions but a little meal. Jack, however, found a sack of potatoes in a bin at the back of the kitchen, and some grain in the small stable. He brought a handful of the potatoes back with him after he had made

his tour of investigation, and exhibited them in triumph. He built a rousing fire on the hearth, and they roasted the potatoes in the ashes, becoming quite cheerful in the warmth and comfort.

"If we only had some hot coffee, we would be faring very well," said Jack, as he tried one of the potatoes to see if it were done.

Marianne looked thoughtfully into the fire. " Didn't you say there was some rye in the stable? " she asked.

"Yes, I think there is a very little."

"Then if you will bring me some, we can brown it and pound it up and make a very good sort of drink; that is, if you are not too hungry to wait for it. There is some maple sugar in the cupboard; I found it in a crock, but we haven't milk."

"Who cares for milk? I'll get the rye." It took some time to prepare their rye coffee; but with this addition to their meal they felt themselves well served, and were fairly merry over their breakfast.

The warm food and drink brought a little color into Marianne's cheeks, though she was still very nervous and started at the slightest sound, sometimes finding it impossible to keep back the tears. Once she gave way entirely and put her head down on the table, sobbing so hopelessly that it was too much for Jack. He came over and knelt by her side, taking her hands in his:—

"Marianne, Marianne, don't cry so, little girl! You are safe here; and as soon as we can go, I will take you over to your grandmother. I will not leave you a minute alone. You know I would shed my last drop of blood for you. What do other men do who see those they love massacred before their very eyes? When I think of your being spared such a horrible fate, I think only of being glad."

"Don't Jack, don't. You have saved my life," the words came haltingly, "but don't talk so."

"I'm a wretch," he cried, springing to his feet. "I'm a pretty soldier to allow myself to get unstrung, but the sight of your tears was too much for me. I ought to have known better than to distress you. Come, we won't talk about it any more. The thing to do is to decide what is to be done next."

CHAPTER XVI

Jerusha to the Rescue

IT was something of a puzzle to Jack to know the best step to take next. The country on one side the river had been laid waste by the Americans, and up and down the other side was at this momentraging a relentless band of soldiers with their savage allies bent upon destruction and pillage. Jack did not feel at all sure that Madame Desvouges still occupied her house, and to attempt to go across to it just now was not a wise venture.

It seemed safer there in the little cabin, isolated as it was in the woods, and far from the beaten road; and if Marianne could but have her mother or some older woman with her, it would be best for her to remain in this retreat till matters became quieter. The girl was too weak and ill from the shock of the morning to venture forth that day, and he could not leave her to get aid. He felt that he ought to report at the proper time for duty, yet to leave Marianne was not to be thought of. It must be said that the scenes of the morning were not such as gave him much taste for

further proceedings of like character, and he was quite content to remain where he was, if turning women and children out of their homes was the order of the day.

"If you would rather go on, Marianne," he said, when the confronting question became one which must be met, "we will go, but I don't believe you are able to walk far. I can carry you, to be sure."

"Where?" she asked helplessly. It was very unlike the alert, independent Marianne to reply so utterly upon another's lead.

"To the garrison. I am sure there must be a number there under our protection."

"Those whose houses you have burned over their heads, you mean?"

"Yes; but I did not have a hand in it. You don't believe that of me, Marianne? I am willing to fight for my side, but I am not a robber."

Marianne subsided after her flash of anger. "Is it far?" she asked, after a little while.

"It is not very near."

The girl arose and looked out on the winter landscape. The yard and outbuildings of this woodland hut occupied but a small space of the great forest around them. The naked branches of a multitude of trees, clumps of white fringed pines, silence, and an untrodden waste alone seemed there. All Marianne's terror returned to her. She sank down weakly upon

the bench by the small window. "I cannot, I cannot," she wailed. "Go and leave me here."

"Alone? Never. I am going now outside to gather in some wood, and to set a trap to snare a rabbit for our next meal. We won't starve, anyway." He smiled confidently. "I shall not go out of sight. You don't mind if I leave you? You can watch me from the window."

This quick understanding of her fear of being left alone was a relief to the girl, and she smiled faintly. "I am very silly," she said.

"No, you have had enough of a shock to shatter the nerves of a stronger woman," he made reply. He longed to take her in his arms and convince her of the greatness of his love and sympathy, of his desire to protect her; but he could only nod and smile reassuringly as he went out. From time to time he looked back to see the little pale face at the window, with eyes upon him. He had loved her in a fitful boyish way before, but now all his manhood's best was roused, and to the woman within, in that hour he consecrated the love of his life. "I may never win her," he told himself. "After this terrible experience how could she ever love one of her country's enemies, but I will serve her as the knights of old served their chosen ladies." They had talked of his father, of Royal and Kate, of all the things which had befallen them both

since they last met; and to Jack, Marianne had never seemed so near; but for the one great barrier he felt that he might not despair of one day winning from her something more than tolerance. A great wave of love and devotion swept over him, and he turned to wave a hand to the girl watching him. If that were his wife at the window and that were their little home in the wilderness, how gladly would he give the labor of each day to her happiness.

He was roused from these thoughts by the sound of voices coming up the path ahead. He stopped with a pile of wood upon his shoulder and listened. Were they friends or enemies? Who could they be who knew the way to this lonely spot? Presently he caught sight of two figures; a man and a woman were nearing the cabin. The young man placed himself back of the path, that he might watch them unobserved. Were they the owners of the place, or were they some of those fugitives whom the morning had driven forth. In another instant he was aware that the man wore the uniform of a Canadian volunteer, and that the woman, tall and gaunt, was striding along as if she knew her ground.

"I tell you," the sharp high voice said, "I guess we're right. They ain't no other tracks, and I see him make for the woods with her. They ain't no other habitation in two or three miles, and I cal'late we'll

find 'em just about here. My land, Jooly Fooshay, you needn't try to learn me wood ways; I guess I was brought up in the heart of Maine, and I was around long enough before I see you to know a thing or two. I say I'm right."

Jack strode forward into the middle of the path. "Jerusha!" he cried. "My old friend Jerusha, you couldn't be more welcome if you were an angel from heaven."

Jerusha came to a halt. "Well, suz!" she exclaimed. "If I'd knowed who it was makin' off with Mary Ann, I dunno as I'd been in such a feeze to git here. She's alive and kickin' I guess, or you wouldn't be so smilin'."

"She's safe, but dreadfully shaken, poor little girl, and so weak and nervous. But no wonder. It was God's providence that I was in time to save her."

"It was nip and tuck with us all," returned Jerusha. "This is my husband. I dunno's I've any call to be proud of the fact, but such as he is, he's mine. Jooly Fooshay is his name."

"Why, Jules! I know him. He is in my regiment. Why didn't he tell you who it was that was running off with your Marianne?"

"I didn't ask him; more fool I."

"Well, he is a lucky fellow to have you for a wife, no matter what."

"The luck's all on his side, then," returned Jerusha.

"My Jerushe! You to say so, when I am save the life of you."

"You may be my death yet," she retorted grimly.

But now Marianne saw them coming, and she was at the door to meet them. Whose but Jerusha's could be that tall lank figure? All in a turmoil of tears and exclamations, she fell into the good woman's arms. "Oh, Jerusha, Jerusha! I am so thankful, so glad to see you alive. Tell me quick, my mother, my mother, is she safe?"

"Yes, yes, child. There, don't take on so. She's at the garrison. The doctor says she's broke a small bone, but he has set it, and she'd be all right only she is near crazy about you. If we had been sensible enough to ask who 'twas that was lugging you off, we might have been easier in our minds."

"Tell me what happened. I forget all but that terrible moment when the Indian had me in his grasp. I cannot get rid of that memory, try as I will."

"Well, the most surprising thing that happened to me was the coming across my husband, that I ain't seen this fifteen year. He declares that he didn't run off with another woman, and that he was hurt up there in a lumber camp; but law suz, you can't tell when to believe him, and I don't know any more than I did before. I was well rid of him, in any

case, for he never could do much but fiddle and sing. Work wasn't his strong pint; and though I've heerd tell of folks that fiddled for their bread and butter, I ain't never seen one. Anyways we come acrost each other, and here we are. Jooly Fooshay is his name, and one that will never bring him much luck. Come here, Jooly."

The curly-headed little man with the bright twinkling eyes approached and bowed low. "Jules Fouchet, at your sairvice, mademoiselle," he said; and when Marianne answered in French his eyes twinkled more than ever, and he bowed again very low.

"Come in, come in all of you," said Jack.

"Yes, we have a good fire, and we can give you something to eat. Jack has been very good to me, Jerusha, and we have not starved. I can give you potatoes and porridge and rye coffee. Are you cold? Are you hungry?"

"A little of both," Jerusha replied. "But I guess the first thing to do is to get back word to your mother that you are safe, and she needn't put on mourning for you yet."

"Shall I go at once? Would you rather have me?" Jack asked eagerly.

"I? Oh — yes — no — that is — Will it be best that Jack go, Jerusha?"

Jerusha looked into the fire thoughtfully, pinching

her chin the while. "I guess it depends upon who'd be the best fighter if we happened to need him," she returned. "This here man of mine — Sakes! I never expected to call a British soldier my man, and I ain't so proud of it now. Well, as I was a-saying, so far as my judgment goes, he'd as lief crawl under the bed as to stand up and defend us."

"Ah, but Jerushe," broke in Jules, "you have forgot that but to-day I r-rescue you from the hand of the savage."

"You git out! Ain't I set by myself night after night alone, with the wolves howling outside the house, and you miles away with your boon companions in a tavern? I guess you'd better go, for you'll not stop till you reach the garrison, I well know; and so far as I'm consarned, you needn't come back."

Jules shrugged his shoulders. "She has the tongue of sharpness, but the heart is not so like steel as she would pretend," he said in an aside to Jack. "If you will have it so, Jerushe, I will go and I will return. Prepare your message that I may be off, else the wolf is surely possess himself of me." He laughed good-naturedly.

"But you must have something to eat first," Marianne insisted.

Both she and Jack perceived that the little man had a real affection for Jerusha, and that he was rejoiced

to find her again, while she, despite her words to the contrary, was not so ill-pleased to have met her husband.

"All you've got to do," said Jerusha, "is to tell Mis' Reyburn where we are, and that I'm going to stay by Mary Ann till I'm able to fetch her home. Tell her we've got full and plenty to eat; there's a bag of nice good potatoes in the kitchen, and meal, too. You can say the child is well, which ain't a lie, so far as I know. Now, if this young gentleman has any word to send, let him give it to you and you can be off. You won't git ketched by nawthin' wuss'n your own kind, I guess; and if you don't take in seven other sperits wuss'n yourself, I haven't no doubts but what you'll git there alive. Now hurry up and eat them wittles and be off."

He did not delay in making away with the food set before him, and then made ready to depart. "But not without one kees, Jerushe," he said.

"Go 'long, you've no time for foolishness," declared Jerusha, giving him a gentle push with her elbow, and looking at Marianne in a funny embarrassed way. But she followed Jules to the door, and he departed with the note Jack had prepared for him to give his captain. "Now then," said Jerusha, when she had watched him out of sight, "nobody can tell when they'll see him agin. He is as onsartin as old

Sancho. He's soft as dough, and as easy going and ready to be led as a blind hoss; but I guess he'll give the message all right, whatever happens to him after. I felt as if you'd be better cal'lated to look after us if anything happened, Mr. Jack, and I hope you don't mind staying."

"Mind!" Jack was glad enough of the opportunity which made it his duty to remain and watch over these two, dependent upon him alone for protection there in the lonely woods. He knew that his report of himself would satisfy his superior officer, and with the wolves howling outside, and the predatory Indians, more to be feared than the wild beasts, roaming the forest, they shut themselves in that night. Sitting around the fire they talked quietly; Jerusha's spirits, as usual, rose in proportion to the gravity of the situation, but Marianne's heart was very full. Her mother ill and needing her; her father retreating before an angry foe; Royal and Kate separated from her by more than miles of distance; her own home in ashes, and her grandmother's perhaps also in ruins—all these things so weighed upon her spirits that she sat hearing only half the things which Jack and Jerusha said.

"The' ain't no use kicking agen the pricks," Jerusha told her. "The Lord's delivered you out of the hand of the Philistine, and has set your feet upon a safe

place. You've passed through deep waters, but the Lord's 'stablished your goings, Mary Ann, and you've no cause to complain. You've been a pretty light-hearted crittur, but you may be permitted to win your crown through tribulation."

"There, Jerusha, there," put in Jack, "don't make her think she must suffer any more."

"I ain't said so. I dunno's she ain't had her own passel young. We all have to git it; some gits it old, and some young. I guess mebbe it's best to git it young, and be over with it. Land alive, child, you needn't cry now. You're safe and sound and sheltered and shod."

But Marianne's tears would not be stayed, and she wept so forlornly that Jerusha's tenderness, rarely shown, was stirred.

"Poor little lamb," she said, "I guess I know just how you feel; just as if you'd like to be little and curl up in your mother's lap, and git rocked and sung to. My old bones ain't very soft, but there, you come and let me hold you." She drew the girl into her lap, and to the sound of a creaking old chair and the singing of a tea-kettle swung over the sizzling logs, Marianne rested.

Jack sat and watched the two. How pitifully small and helpless the girl looked with her eyes closed, the long lashes brushing the pale cheek. What a plaintive

droop to the sweet mouth, and how her slim fingers curled themselves around Jerusha's bony ones, as if they found comfort in the human clasp. All the terrible consequences of war arose before him. How lightly he had entered the army, and how little he anticipated the horrors of his experience. And this was not the end. He felt as if he must take the little figure lying there in Jerusha's arms, and fly away with her to some safe spot where the clamors of war would never be heard. He sat moodily looking into the fire before he spoke his thought. "To-morrow I will find out if Madame Desvouges's house is still untouched. It will seem more like home to Marianne than any other place."

"If you think the child is going to be ready to take a journey to-morrow, you are mistaken," Jersusha told him. "She's had about as much travelling as she can stand for a while. I guess she'd better stay right here, as long as it's safe."

True enough, Jerusha knew what she was talking about, for the next day saw Marianne in a raging fever, murmuring incoherent words, and crying out wildly as she tossed on her hard bed. "Poor lamb! Poor lamb!" said Jerusha, shaking her head; "mebbe it's just as well that she should be taken, and be spared any more trials. The Lord knows what's before her, and it's only when we've drunk the cup to the dregs

that we begin to think that death ain't our worst portion."

"We must save her; we must," said Jack, fiercely. "Don't you dare let yourself believe for one moment that she is going to die."

"Look here, young man, it ain't you or me that's got anything to say about it. I'll do my best, I guess you know that, and you will do your best; but if she's going to be snatched from this vale of tears, we poor worms ain't powerful to prevent it." Her face softened as she saw Jack's distress. "Poor boy," she went on, "it goes hard with you, but, then, it's all a snarl at best. You just go along there to the garrison, and get me some medicine, and with the doctoring I'm able to give her, she'll pull through if it's the Lord's will. She's got youth and a good constitution on her side. You needn't be afraid of leaving me for a few hours. I'm not a mite scared. It's best to give the boy something to do," she said to herself, as he strode off. "He can't do no good moping around here."

She went in and bent over Marianne, putting a finger on the quickly beating pulse. "She's a pretty sick child," said Jerusha, her face working. "Poor little lamb, I've nursed you 'most from a baby, and I guess you won't die from want of attention."

CHAPTER XVII

Asa Again

THE spring had fairly begun to show signs of its coming, when Marianne was at last able to creep out into the sunshine and face the world again. But that she viewed it with the eyes of buoyant youth, it would have seemed a very sad world. She had heard nothing of her parents except mere rumors. Jack had been ordered away, and Jules too. An old Indian woman was Jerusha's only helper through the long winter's siege, but both women were accustomed to a hardy life and knew how to make the forest yield them the necessities for existence, and they had fared better than might be imagined. Little news of the outside world reached them in their quiet retreat, and Marianne, ready once more to take an interest in affairs, began to question. She could gather but scant news. The British were still in possession of Fort Niagara; the country on both sides the river was almost a desolation, most families having fled beyond the Genesee.

"But where are they all, mother and father and Royal? And grandmother, is she still in her home? Is it burned, too? And what has become of Sue and Kate?" These questions came crowding to Marianne's lips.

"Now look here, Mary Ann," said Jerusha, "do you think I've had nawthin' better to do than to set down and write letters and go gadding over the country a-hunting up your relations? Land sakes, child, it's been as much as I could do to haul you back from the Valley of the Shadder, without trying to edit a bulletin of war news."

"Well, tell me what you know," said Marianne, with the fretfulness of an invalid.

Jerusha sat down and planted her big veined hands upon her knees. "Mebbe you remember we sent word to your mother by Jooly. When he got back to the garrison, she'd gone. Some folks had told her she could git to your father by going with them, and she needed doctoring, and they promised to see that she got to her kin-folks in Geneva. Then somehow it got reported that I had gone off with Jooly to Canady agin, because I had found out that you was dead and couldn't bear to tell her. I don't know what fool started the story, but seeing me and him making off together to hunt you up, I suppose it got out that way."

"Oh, poor mother, poor mother!" Marianne cried.
"Does she know now?"

"I dunno as she does, and then I dunno as she doesn't. I made a fist of writing to her, and told her to stay where she was if she was comfortable; that we was safe and well enough off for the present. I didn't feel I'd ought to write till you was out of danger, for if she believed you wasn't counted among the living 'twa'n't no use to undeceive her till we was certain about you. I got an Injun to git the letter through the lines. I didn't rightly know her directions, but I hope she got the letter. You'd been sick about a week, I guess, when young Jack Silverthorn was ordered away. He'd done the best he could to make us comfortable by gitting medicine and flour and what stuff he could, and it was him got old Acsah to stay with me. While he was here, I'll say it for both him and Jooly, they kept me in wittles and fire-wood. After they went I had to make the best of it, but the old squaw has been a human being to speak to, and she ain't so helpless.

"We made the best of it, as I said; and what with keeping bags of ice on your head and finding kivers warm enough for you and us, and food enough to keep body and soul together, we had about all we could do for three months. But there! we've had a shelter, and the woods is full of game of all kinds,

so we did manage to git enough, though some days it was slim pickings. We sewed the skins together for kivers,—the old Injun is a master hand at that,—and she got a few blankets from her people, so we ain't neither friz nor starved. Howsomever it's all over now, and we'll move along pretty soon, I guess, though I dunno jest where; they say they ain't skeerce a house left standing." She nursed her knees thoughtfully.

"They say it was for revenge because the Americans burnt Newark; pretty heavy revenge to destroy six villages, not to mention dozens of farmhouses, and wuss than all, to murder scores of innocent people. Somebody's got to pay a heavy debt when he goes to meet his jedgment. I told Jooly I didn't know as I wanted he should come near me agin if he come as an inimy of my country, but I dunno's he would come anyway. But there, I've talked my throat dry. It's summer instid of winter coming, and all you've got to do, Mary Ann, is to set still and git well."

There was nothing but hope to keep up Marianne's spirits. It was dreary work to spend her time sitting alone in the woods with never a visitor but an inquisitive squirrel or a bird tamer than his neighbors; yet Marianne day by day grew stronger, though with her strength came a deeper longing to get to her



"She had discovered a comfortably hollowed seat"



friends. She was sitting one day under a huge tree, among whose roots she had discovered a comfortably hollowed seat, when she saw coming up the checkered path a man whose destination seemed to be the cabin. He was short and spare of figure, with grizzled beard standing well out from under his chin. As soon as Marianne caught sight of him, she sprang to her feet with less listlessness than she had shown for months. "Asa!" she cried; "Asa Peaslee!"

"Wal, I vum!" exclaimed the pedler, stopping short as he caught sight of the girl. "I wouldn't skeerce hev knowed you, yer that pindlin'; 'most starved, air ye?"

"No; but I have been ill. I am so glad to see you. How did you find us?"

"Who ye got in there?" asked the pedler, peering suspiciously at the cabin.

"Only Jerusha and an old Indian woman."

"I didn't find ye; I jest stumbled on ye. I seen smoke, and thinks I, where there's smoke there's fire, and I trotted in this direction. I ain't takin' a very direct route, seein' as me and the Britishers ain't on the best of terms. Where's your folks?"

"I don't know. I haven't heard from them in three or four months." And she proceeded to tell her pitiful tale.

"I vum!" repeated Asa. "Wal, pop's prisoner up

to Quebec, I guess, and if the ijits that has the exchanges in hand don't git 'em fixed some day soon, he'll stay there awhile, but I hear they treat 'em pretty good up there. Young Lyle's all right; I see him a couple of weeks ago, said his wife was in Geneva. As for the rest of the crew, I dunno as I keer to run up agen 'em, seein' as me and them don't pull the same direction. Ain't heerd nawthin' of your granny and them, hev ye?"

"No, and I wish I could. Ah, but I do so long to reach them. I don't know whether their house has been destroyed or not."

Asa picked up a bit of a twig and chewed the end of it thoughtfully. "Wouldn't keer to hev me go out and find out, I s'pose. I'm achin' to do it; ye know my curiosity'll kill me yit. I'd like nawthin' better than to slip over and find out how the land lays."

"Oh, would you? Could you without danger?"

"We ain't talkin' about danger; we're talkin' about findin' out what's goin' on across the river. I guess I'll sneak over. I'll begin hitchin' along to-night. You're right snug here. Nobody'd ever think of lookin' for a house in these here woods."

"It has been a good shelter; we had to take possession of it. Some day I hope we shall be able to tell the owners what a godsend it has been to us."

"You do look pindlin'," Asa repeated. "I guess the sooner ye git to grandma's the better. Now I'll go along and speak to Jerushy. I'll set round and chat with ye all till towards night, and then I must be gittin' on."

"You are always on hand in time of need," Marianne told him.

"Wal, no, I can't say jest that, or I'd been here sooner. It jest seems to be a time of need when I do happen along. They ain't much noos stirrin'; some little skirmishes at sea; it's got to be a game of give and take."

"I thought you were going to join the marines, Asa."

"Who says I didn't?"

"Did you really?"

Asa nodded. "J'int 'em there on the lakes; was along with Cap'n Perry."

"You were? Oh, how proud you must be."

"Dunno's I'm runnin' over with pride. I can't say as I take to sailorin', so I left when my time was up, and I've been hangin' around camp all winter watchin' 'em drill and gittin' ready for spring. I guess they'll be better fighters when Gin'r'l Scott's through with 'em. But, as I was a-sayin', I got tired of standin' round doin' nawthin', so I snuck off this way to watch my opportunity of bein' of use, and here I be."

Jerusha greeted him with a jerk of the head and went on with her soap making. She did not waste a scrap of grease, and had her kettle of soft soap ready when it was needed. She listened attentively to Asa's recital while she worked, and after a while set off her kettle and invited him into the house. "You'll have a bite with us," she said. "I can't offer you much chice of wittles; you'll have to take what you kin git."

"I guess I kin give my thanks right purtily fur what's set before me," returned Asa. "And I dassay I kin furnish ye with a bite of somethin', I see a likely spot as I came along. I keep a bit of line in my pocket, and I guess I kin hook ye a fish." He was as good as his word, and half an hour later a fine trout was sizzling over the fire. Asa made good use of his afternoon, bringing in wood and water and setting traps for game. Toward night he started off with a hearty good-by, and Marianne's hopes arose.

He reappeared three or four days later as if it were nothing unusual to come and go in this fashion. "Found 'em as easy as rolling off a log," he called to Marianne, who went out to meet him. "'Most eat me up when I told 'em I'd seen you. They were afeard you was dead, scalped by the Injuns and all that. They've been kinder lucky, havin' friends both sides. The Americans spared 'em because your pop hap-

pened to be a captaining, and the Britishers spared 'em because their friends and neighbors was along to see that they did. So you see it's well to have your bread buttered on both sides. They sent ye messages by the cartload, but I couldn't find a vehicle for 'em all, so I'll jest give ye the gist of 'em, and that is, that as soon as ever ye kin, yer to come home to 'em. I told 'em ye was safe and in good hands, or the young man, Victor, would have come along with me. I told him he'd ought to stay there and look after his women folks, and I guessed you'd find a way to git there."

"And you saw them all, grandmother and Victorine and Victor?"

"All three of them."

"Kate was not there, of course. Did they say anything about her and Royal? I hope they are safe."

Asa did not reply quite so readily as before. "They said she was all right," he told her, after a slight pause.

"And we will go — when will we go, Jerusha?" Marianne asked.

"Soon as convenient," was all the reply Jerusha would vouchsafe.

Asa, having satisfied his curiosity in more ways than one, did not seem inclined to tarry, but went off with his usual little quip of being so ready to poke his nose into the affairs of others.

"That man's nobody's fool," declared Jerusha, shak-

ing her head knowingly. "He gits around and finds out what he wants when nobody'd ever suspect it, but I guess the spying ain't all of the most innercent kind." And then it dawned on Marianne that there was method in Asa's curiosity.

She fretted to get away, but Jerusha had one of her contrary moods and would not humor her, saying that patience was a virtue, and that it was good for folks not to get what they wanted at once; so poor Marianne was more than usually irritable after Asa left. The days were growing warmer, and she could spend more time in the open air, and one afternoon went a little farther from the cabin than usual to hunt for wild flowers. She was standing on tiptoe trying to reach a branch of dogwood, when she heard a voice call out, "Don't fall into a bog!" And then, running, leaping from tangled roots to tufted knoll, Jack came hastening toward her. "Marianne, Marianne!" he cried; "did I startle you? How glad I am to find you still here, and to know you are well again. You are well?" He came up and held out both hands, into which she put hers. She wondered at herself for being so glad to see him, a Britisher, whom she ought to despise, even if he had saved her from a dreadful fate. She ought to hate the fact of the obligation. Yet it was Jack, and he had saved her life; she could not forget that. He stood holding her

hands and looking down at her critically. "How thin you are," he said tenderly, "and your eyes have grown so big, but they are as blue as ever. Did they have to cut your hair so short? It does not look badly so, though it makes you look more like a little girl than ever."

Marianne laughed. "Like the little girl you first thought I was. Was that why you called to me not to fall into a bog?"

"Yes; it reminded me of that time when I first saw you in the woods. I was so glad to see you alive and well. It nearly broke my heart to go off and leave you lying there so ill in that poor little cabin."

"It was much better than many poor people had, and Jerusha was like a mother to me. I should have died but for her."

"Yes, I know." Jack softly stroked one of her hands, which she allowed to lie passively in his. Such a thin little hand it was. "I have thought of you so constantly all winter," he went on.

Marianne looked down a little uneasily. "Have you seen your family?" she asked. "Do you hear from Sue and Kate?"

"I have not seen either of them lately. I have been on special duty, which has taken me out of the neighborhood. Sue, I believe, is with friends in Geneva."

"I think my mother is there, too, though I have not heard a word from her since we parted on that dreadful day." She shuddered and grew pale at the remembrance. "Perhaps some day," she sighed, "all this dreadful time will end, and we shall all be together again. My grandmother wishes me to come to her. Asa was here, and he found out for me that they are still at the old home. I was so glad to know; it seemed as if something were still left to me. Asa brought me the very first news I have had."

"Asa Peaslee, you mean?" Jack's brows came together thoughtfully, and he shook his head as if he would say, this will not do; but he only remarked, "It is well I did not come along at the same time."

"Why? Oh, yes, I see; you think he is too—curious." Marianne smiled. "Well, perhaps he is too much so for his own good, but—"

"Your people don't think so? All's fair in love and war, and I have no right to question his behavior. He is a good friend to you, and that should be enough for me to know. So you will go to your grandmother, Marianne?"

"Yes; as soon as convenient, Jerusha says."

"I suppose that means as soon as you can get safe passage over. She does not want to run any risks, and she is right."

"Ah me, if only this dreadful war were over. Is there any prospect of peace?"

"One can hardly say. I wish it were over, for then we might be placed on a different footing, and you might not feel as if you ought to hate me."

"I don't—hate you—but—"

"You don't love me. I know that—I could not expect that you would, and I have no right to ask you to. All I ask is that you sometimes give me a kind thought. Do you ever?"

"I don't think I ought to hate you, for you saved my life. I can never forget how good you were to me that day." Her lip trembled like a hurt child's, and Jack drew a long sigh at sight of it.

"Heaven knows I would never take advantage of that to force you to think kindly of me," he said. "This winter, many times, when I have not known whether you were dead or alive, when it seemed as if I might expect my own death at any moment, I have wished that I had told you how much I loved you. No, you need not answer. I only want to tell you, so you will know that I love you, love you, love you, not as a boy loves,—that was at first; now it is a man's devotion I give you. I don't let myself hope I can ever win from you more than a kind tolerance; but if you were my enemy ten times over; if you, by your own act, handed me over to your

own people to be shot or hung, or sent to languish my life away in prison, I should still love you, love you. Ah, how good you are to let me say' it, and not forbid me. I have felt sometimes as if I must tell you or die. Marianne, Marianne, how much I thank you. You have let me tell you that I love you." The words poured out with passionate fire, not indeed as a boy would say them, yet it was not two years since they had met, and he had hardly reached man's estate.

Marianne was thrilled to the very core of her being. She felt that this was true love; that he had given her the best he would ever have to give, and she stood silent and awed in the presence of this great affection. "I don't see how you can feel so," she said, after a moment. She drew her hand gently away from his clasp. "You know it would be impossible. I ought to feel more than grateful, because you stood between me and death at the risk of your own life."

He lifted his hand, and she understood that it hurt him for her to refer again to that, but she went on: "Ever since then—and—yes, before, I wanted to like you, but I felt that I couldn't; I should not, when you were my country's enemy—my father's enemy and mine—but I have—I do think kindly of you. I can't help that, and I don't believe it is dis-

loyal—when—when—that is all I do. But you see—you know, it could only be a friendship at the best."

"I know," he said gently. "It makes me very happy to hear you say that it can be that; and if I fall before the war is over, you will have known that if I could give my life for you it would not be too much, but that to have told you of my love will bring me peace in my last hour."

Again Marianne's lip trembled. "Don't talk that way, please, and—and I am not worthy of all that. I don't see how you can feel so when I—"

"When you don't care for me? Jerusha might tell you that you have yet to learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive," he said, smiling; for, seeing that she was white and shaken by this interview, he reproached himself for having been so insistent. "Forgive me, Marianne," he said. "I didn't realize that you are not as strong as you might be, and I am afraid I have been inconsiderate in talking."

"No, no," she smiled, "don't mind. I am a little easily made nervous, but I am getting stronger every day; and please don't blame yourself if I seem silly and babyish. I cry so easily nowadays that Jerusha has no patience with me. I intend to get strong and well; you know it's only a question of time." She was very gentle and quiet, quite different from the

Marianne of old; but her very gentleness appealed to him all the more.

They walked slowly toward the cabin, and though Jerusha was not very cordial in her greeting, she was not ill-pleased to see the young man again. "There is a stir in the armies," he told them, "and one does not know just where it is safe. We hold Fort Niagara, it is true, but the Americans say that they are determined to relieve us of that responsibility, if what the spies and deserters tell us be true. I think the longer we delay in making our way to your grandmother's, Marianne, the worse for your safety."

So then it was that with a sort of grim regret Jerusha bade farewell to her leach pits, her soap kettle, her small stores and belongings which had made the little cabin a real home to her, and after seeing Acsah returned to her people, she started out with Marianne into what new trials neither could foresee.

CHAPTER XVIII

Sorrowful Hearts

OF the few houses left standing in that border country, Madame Desvouges's was one. Victor, it is true, had not had an easy time of it, and more than once was threatened with expulsion by one party or the other, but Victor was not combative; he had no personal grievance, he told the authorities, and why should he fight? When they attempted to burn his home over his head, for Madame Desvouges and for his sister he would do battle, but he had friends in both armies, and why should he quarrel with one or the other? Such obvious neutrality was quite enough to assure any one of his peaceable intentions; and even when orders were given that every able-bodied man should be pressed into service, Victor somehow managed to slip out of the way, and calmly held to his post, while up and down the land ravaging bands of foragers, hangers-on of both armies, and plunderers of all sorts, were laying waste the country. "My place is here," declared Victor; "I am the garrison, the commandant, what officer you will, of this fort, and here I remain."

And so the besom of destruction passed over the old house, and it was left to its occupants who clung to it so obstinately. It is true they had been stripped of nearly all that could be of use to either army, but the more they were called upon for supplies, the more indefatigably did Victor plant and reap and gather into barns, so that he came to be considered quite a valuable commissariat, and perhaps that was the reason he was let alone.

It was one cold night during the time that Marianne was lying ill that those at the Desvouges farm were startled by hearing rapid hoof beats coming up the lane. Madame cast a quick look of apprehension at Victor. "Some one for you, my son?"

"Perhaps," he replied, "but there can be nothing to alarm us, when the men are all in winter quarters and no expeditions are likely to be undertaken."

"Go, then, and see who it is."

Victor lighted his lantern and went to the door. It was snowing drearily, in heavy flakes. The horse was coming fast up the lane, between the rows of leafless trees; at the gate he stopped of his own accord. Victor held up his lantern. "Who is it?" he cried.

"For the love of Heaven, Victor, help us," said a familiar voice.

"Royal!" cried Victor. Not once since that day

when his grandmother had bidden him take his wife away had Royal entered the house. He and Victor had met: they bore each other no ill-will. Victor had few, if any, enemies; he was always disposed to be tolerant. True, Royal had disappointed his grandmother, but, argued Victor, he did it unwittingly, and so now to see him at the gate at this hour and in this weather argued some disaster. As he turned the light of his lantern fuller upon Royal, he saw that he was not alone. Close to his breast he held his wife, and under her cloak was warmly clasped a tiny baby.

At sight of this down went Victor's lantern in a twinkling. "Give me the little one," he said, holding out his arms. "Victorine! Maman!" he shouted. "Here!" Victorine came running out, and into her arms Victor laid the child. "It is Royal's baby," he said. And Victorine enfolded the tiny bundle closer. "Run in with the little one; it is cold," Victor urged, and then he gave his attention to Kate, gently helping her down. As she reached the ground she staggered into the arms of Madame Desvouges, opened to receive her. "Go in quickly," said Victor, "and I will come with Royal; he is hurt, I think."

"To the death," murmured Royal. "Get me in, Victor, I have not long."

The tears were rolling down Madame's face as she

knelt by Kate, who had fainted upon reaching the warm room. "She is ill and weak, poor child," said Madame. "Such a little baby, Victorine. Ah me, how cruel to drive them out into this bitter night." Between them they got Kate into an inner room. Victorine laid the child by her side, and the two women gave themselves up to ministering to the mother and child, while Victor helped Royal to his own bed.

"It is no use," gasped Royal. And, indeed, Victor saw that no effort of his could stay the hand of the death angel. "They came upon us," Royal said, speaking with difficulty, "no, no, not American soldiers, they were but a band of plunderers and ruffians with no country. They drove us out and set fire to the house. They would have done worse but I struck down one fellow and seized his horse—I managed to get Kate and the boy, but—they fired—and—I am hard hit." He lay breathing heavily. "Poor Kate!" he said, after a time. "You will—not—let her—suffer, Victor. And my little son. Where is Victorine? She—will be—good—to my—boy. He, you know—my father forgave me—the letter is here—" He laid his hand feebly on his breast. "He—it was all cross purposes—misunderstandings. Mother—and poor—little Marianne—I—don't—know—where they are. You'll be good—to Kate—and—the boy, Victor?"

"I swear to you I will," said Victor, gravely. "They shall not suffer while I am able to help them."

"Victorine!"

Victor went to the door and called his sister. She came in quick response. Victor took her two hands in his. "Victorine, my poor girl, he is dying."

"No, no!" Victorine clutched his hand with frantic clasp.

"He has asked for you. Can you be calm?"

"Yes, yes, I can. I will."

They entered the room together. The man lying there was growing very weak. "Victorine," he whispered, "good angel, Victorine — you — will — love my — boy? Kate, my wife — is she — is she — "

"She is very weak, but comparatively comfortable. We have put her to bed. Maman is with her."

A smile came over the man's face. "Grand'mère?"

"Yes. Ah, Royal, dear boy, you need not fear for your wife and son. We will love them and care for them. Maman is so distressed. She reproaches herself."

"No — she must not. Grand'mère!"

The elder woman was summoned. She came, trembling and wretched. "I drove you from me, Royal. I did this dreadful thing!" she cried, wringing her hands. "Where should you have brought your young wife but here to your own people? Ah

me, I have a cruel, bad heart. Live, Royal, live, and I will show you how tender I can be to your wife and child. Such a little child, so small and helpless! My great-grandson. Ah me! that I should be so cruel." She burst into uncontrollable weeping.

The dying man's eyes rested on Victorine. "My boy," he said.

"You want to see him?"

"Yes," came the faint whisper.

Victorine went out, and returned with the little one, who opened his baby eyes and blinked as he was brought into the lighted room. Victorine laid him by Royal's side, and the baby closed its little hand around one of his father's chill fingers. Royal's eyes, full of a strange, awed, yearning expression, sought Victorine. "My son," he said, "and he will have no father."

"I will be a father to him, Royal," said Victor, in a broken voice.

"And he shall be my dearest care," Victorine told him. "If God spares me, and so far as a woman can, I will watch over him, and I pray he may grow to be a good man. His mother shall not be left to battle alone; be sure of that."

Royal smiled. He seemed content. His eyes closed, and he lay very still, each moment pulsing out his last heart-beats. Victorine bent over him, an agony

of love in her eyes. Once more he smiled at her.
“Good angel—Victorine—sing.”

She began tremblingly, faintly; it was so sore a trial, but faith and devotion and heroism gave her strength, and the beautiful voice arose clearer and sweeter. Her eyes were uplifted; one hand clasped Royal's. The sobs of Madame Desvouges grew less and less. She wept quietly. Once more Royal opened his eyes. Before him Victorine held her crucifix, dearer forever after by reason of its having received his last look. There was one deep sigh, and Royal's boy was fatherless. But Victorine, in the very agony of her grief, sang on till her hymn was concluded. Then she sank down on her knees by the bedside. Victor led his mother away, and they left her there with her dead love and his living child.

Kate took her place very quietly in the household. It was weeks before she could leave her bed, and in that time Royal had been laid to rest under the snows of March, and the baby had become the most important member of the family. Nothing in all the world could have brought Victorine the comfort that this helpless bit of humanity was able to give. In her heart he was Roy, her king, though Kate had told her that he was named Walter by his father's wish. Under unremitting love and care, the baby thrrove, and Kate at last was able to take up the busi-

ness of living with a less feeling of loneliness than at first seemed possible. They were all so gentle, so solicitous, so concerned for her and her little son. There was not one in the house who did not make mother and child the first consideration, and though Kate protested, they all assured her that they could not help it; there was nothing in the world so important to them as Royal's wife and child. Therefore Kate accepted this homage graciously and unaffectedly, and grew to love them as they did her. So that when Marianne arrived late in the spring, she found at her grandmother's quite a new state of things: Queen Kate and his Royal Highness, Sir Walter, absorbing the interest of the whole family.

Marianne had not made her journey without difficulty. With the news of the probable approach of the Americans, who were determined more than ever to conduct a successful invasion of Canada, the country again became the haunt of bands of marauders ready for the slightest excuse to pounce down upon whatever might present itself in the way of plunder. To avoid these, who might almost be termed bandits, it was necessary that the travellers should proceed cautiously. But with the aid of some friendly Indians, and with Jack as their main protector, they reached the river and were set over safely.

It was a pretty domestic scene which greeted them at

the threshold of Madame Desvouges's door. Kate held her little son, before whose eager eyes Victor dangled a bright coin. Victorine was sewing upon a small garment, fashioned from one of Madame's treasured bits of fine cambric, but none too good for Master Walter. Madame was knitting a pair of baby's socks, and all eyes were given to glancing between times to the baby himself.

Into the room came Marianne, Jerusha, and Jack ; and the first thing, Marianne, too, prostrated herself before the idol. "Oh, the dear love," she cried. "To think I didn't know I was an aunt." She kissed the soft, curling, pink hands, then ran from one to the other to give her greeting. "You knew I would be here soon ? Yes, it was Jack who discovered me. Ah me, but it has been a long, sad winter. Perceive me, grand'mère, as one arisen from the dead. I will tell you my tale of woe later. Yes, I have been ill. Did Asa not tell you? And how are you all? Everybody? And where is Royal?"

There was silence. Kate's head bent low over her baby's. "Our dear Lord has taken him, Marianne," said Victorine, gently. Marianne gazed at her, wide-eyed, and then she fell into a passion of weeping.

But it was Victorine who took her in her arms and tried to comfort her.

"It is so dreadful, so dreadful," sobbed Marianne.

"My only brother, and my father a prisoner, and my mother I cannot tell where. Oh, why did I not die, too? It is too sorrowful a world to live in."

"No, no, dear child," Victorine chided her, gently, "you do not know what may be in store for you. You do not know what work waits for you to do. See, here are all of us who love you, and this dear baby, your nephew; he has your brother's eyes, and he will comfort you as he has all of us." She took the baby from Kate, and placed him in Marianne's arms. And indeed her tears were stayed at sight of the wondering baby eyes; and when the little one smiled up at her, she could but smile back at him.

Jack could not stay with them long. There was too much astir. He and Marianne had one more talk together. For some reason, Marianne discerned that her grandmother did not make such a point of forcing Victor's company upon her; and Victor himself, though the same even-tempered fellow, had not once sought her out for a confidential talk, had not once told her that she was the prettiest girl in the country, nor had he made any allusions to those old days when they were such comrades. Was she, then, so changed? Had her illness and her dire experiences so altered her as to give her no more a claim to being called pretty? She felt quite aggrieved, and perhaps because of that was all the more ready to

join Jack when he asked her to walk with him down to the orchard, where the apple-blossoms were displaying their wonders of pink and white.

"You do not mind going?" he said.

"No, I shall like to," Marianne replied, with a side glance at Victor. She was glad of this opportunity of showing her indifference to her old admirer. To be sure she had never thought of Victor sentimentally, she told herself, and it was time he knew it. She had grown very dependent upon Jack in these days when they had braved the perils of the journey together, and somehow they seemed to have more in common.

They passed out into the spring sunshine, and Kate watched them with a sigh. A year ago, in spring-time, she and Royal were married; so long ago, it seemed. She looked at the little one lying in her lap. Victor came and laid a gentle finger on the baby's soft fuzzy head. "He grows," he said, with pleased interest. "He will soon be walking and talking, Kate, and I will teach him to do many things. Do you notice that he likes music? Already he listens when I take my violin." He took down the instrument from its corner, and began to play softly upon it, watching the baby's face the while.

The gentle strains reached the ears of the two who had seated themselves under a branching apple

tree. "It is Victor," said Marianne. "He plays to the baby. I think," she said, half-aggrieved, "the baby has cut me out."

Jack picked up a rosy petal which had drifted down upon her hand. "Do you care for that?" he asked.

"I don't know. A little, maybe. I don't like to be set aside even for a baby, and then—" She paused, and let the falling petals drift through her fingers.

"And then some day you expect to marry Victor; is that it?" asked Jack, in an unsteady voice.

"No—yes—that is, I cannot tell. Grand'mère has always wanted it to be so, but—I—" She shot a quick glance at Jack, and turned her head aside. "I am beginning to think I could never have cared enough—not in that way. I am beginning to know one doesn't—does not feel just the same toward—oh, I don't know what I am trying to say."

Jack seized her hand. "Marianne, what makes you say this?"

She was silent. "Because I am older, I suppose," she answered, after a pause. "I know better what it means. I couldn't be content to live all my life with Victor; he isn't exciting enough." She laughed a little.

"Then if he were—exciting—you would be willing?"

"Perhaps. I can't tell. That is the way I feel now. I don't know what will suit me a year or two hence."

"You are older than when you fell into the bog, I confess," said Jack. "Ah, Marianne, I am in a worse slough than ever you were in. I fell in then, and I shall never get out unless you pull me. You have your revenge." He sighed. "I am afraid I shall always stay there, for you are not so merciful to a prisoner as I was."

Marianne shook her head. "Don't let us talk about it. You know there is not the slightest, no, not the slightest, possibility of your getting out by my help. I have no doubt," she added brightly, "that some one else will come to your rescue before you are in too deep. Oh, if I could really save your life," she added more seriously, "I would be so glad; for then I would not feel, when I have to tell you the truth, that I ought not for fear of hurting you."

"I know all that," said Jack, humbly. "Shall I put myself in danger to make it easier for you?"

"You ridiculous boy, of course not." She tapped him lightly with a little bunch of blossoms. "At least, the situation has this merit: I can be friends with you without censuring myself, and I never felt that I could before."

"Did you ever want to?"

"Sometimes, yes."

"Then that is a point gained. I feel more hopeful. Isn't it a French fashion — are you French enough — to — to kiss me good-by?"

Marianne colored up. "I — no — but you may kiss my cheek. No, no, not now. When you go." The thought of his going suddenly startled her, and she put both hands over her eyes quickly, as if she would shut out a vision she saw. "Will there be much fighting?" she asked. "Shall you be in many battles, do you think?"

"Who can tell? I go, and that is enough to know. It is all very uncertain. I may come back with flying colors, and I may be stricken down before night; that is a soldier's life. Would you be sorry to lose your — friend?"

"Yes, very. Please don't talk of that as a possibility. Let us be gay and happy. You will come back, we will say and believe; and your grandfather and Kate will live together, and after a while you will marry — Minerva Ashman."

"Never!"

"Oh, I don't mean right away. Years and years from now."

Jack shook his head very positively. "There is only one girl in the world I shall ever be content to marry, and if I cannot have her, I shall live and die an old bachelor. Besides, you forget; it would be cruel

to take Kate from your grandmother and Victorine. I couldn't feel that it would be right to do that."

"Then you will have to go to Kentucky and live with Sue. Would you ever be willing to do it, I wonder."

"I think not. I might go somewhere, miles and miles away. If you—ah, Marianne, if you married, I don't think I could live near you."

"Don't you?" she asked lamely.

"No, I love you too much. There, I said I would not worry you again by saying so, but it is so sweet to tell you and have you listen. Here, under these trees, in the spring sunshine, with war and danger and all so far off, as it seems, I can only think of one thing as I look at you, and that is that I love you. Some day, maybe, if it is my lot to fall upon the battlefield, you may like to remember that you made me so very happy in this our last hour together."

"I am glad if I do." The words came in a whisper. "I think, perhaps, if this is really our last hour together, that you may kiss me good-by now."

"Marianne, dearest, how good you are." He bent to kiss her cheek, but she turned her face and her lips met his. Then she started to her feet and ran back to the house holding one hand over her beating heart; and up to her room she went, to throw herself down on the bed and weep the bitter tears of a newly awakened and hopeless love.

CHAPTER XIX

Marianne Celebrates

THE summer of 1814 found the American troops upon the Niagara frontier more confident than ever before. Under the indefatigable labors of General Scott, they had been vigorously trained, all through the spring, in military tactics, and toward the end of June it was proposed to reopen the campaign. There were British troops encamped at Chippewa; Forts George, Niagara, and Erie were garrisoned, and at Queenston was a small force. There was much sickness in the British camp, and their entire force was not so large but that they had to resort to a draft of one-fourteenth of the male population. This proclamation alarmed Madame Desvouges and Victorine. What if Victor, who had been so fortunately exempt thus far, should now be forced to take up arms, when he was more than ever needed at home? But Victor was again lucky, for the axe did not fall upon his devoted head.

With Royal beyond all hopes and fears, with her father a prisoner at Quebec, all Marianne's anxiety was now centred in Jack, who was in the field and

might at any time be called to battle. There were daily reports that the Americans intended to lose no time in regaining their lost ground, and that they were ready to invade Canada. The British had been vigilant in picking off spies who attempted to cross the river, but, nevertheless, it was known that the Americans were quite aware of the strength—or weakness—of their foe, and that when they came a hot conflict might be expected. Soon the whole country was up in arms. Marching and counter-marching, camps here, there, everywhere; the noise of skirmishing, of hoof-beats up and down the roads, of alarms sounded, of the beat of drums and the call of fifes filled the air.

On the morning of the fourth of July Marianne came downstairs full of enthusiasm. "Independence Day," she cried. "I wish we could win a battle this day."

"You know what that means," said Kate, significantly.

"What?" asked Marianne, wheeling around defiantly.

Kate took her face between her hands. "Your eyes were very red the day Jack went away, little sister."

Marianne bit her lip and gave her head a toss. "Well, and what of it? I suppose I may have my

griefs and that you do not always know the nature of them."

Kate put her arms around her. "Don't be cross, dear. Jack told me long, long ago that you were very dear to him, and it is nothing to be ashamed of that you should shed a tear for his sake."

Marianne's head drooped, and she sighed. "Yes; but, Kate, you know that however much he cared, it could never be anything but a friendship."

"Why?"

"Because he is a Britisher, or the same as one; and my father would be very unhappy, more than ever that he is bereft of his son, if I were to go over to the enemy. I have always stood by father, and I shall always do so, whatever happens."

"Even if it means the breaking of your own heart?"

"I will not let my heart break; but even if it did, rather than not live on American soil I will die by inches, but I will die a free, independent citizen of my own United States; so there!"

"Then nothing will persuade you to live on this side the river? What about Victor? You know your family's desire in that direction."

"Whoever marries me will have to come over to my side. If he doesn't love me enough for that, he can stay at home. But it is Fourth of July, and I want to celebrate. Where is Jerusha? She is a good

American; we will do something together to declare our sentiments. If the country were not full of soldiers, I would ride up to the Falls; only something big and tremendous and exhilarating like that expresses my feelings on this day."

Kate laughed and picked up her baby, who was crowing in his cradle, while Marianne went in search of Jerusha. She found her in the wash-house industriously at work. "It's Fourth of July, Jerusha," said Marianne. "How shall we celebrate?"

"I guess I'm doing all the celebrating I'll do," Jerusha replied. "There's one thing I don't mean shall be said to me, and that is, 'Why stand ye all the day idle?' I've no time for jewlarking."

"Who said anything about that? Just hurrah for the Stars and Stripes, or sing Yankee Doodle while you are washing, or do something. Oh, dear, if one could but have a picnic or something like that, and if some one was here to make a speech and set off fireworks, as we used to do at home, I would be pleased."

Jerusha swashed her clothes up and down vigorously. "There's no time for patriotic speeches these days. The army's on the move, and I guess they'll show their patriotism by a kind of fireworks that ain't very harmless. They say a proclamation has come out, saying that nobody's going to be touched if they're

peaceable and quiet; and I guess we can rest easy, and not be afraid of Injuns being let loose on us. They're marching toward Fort Erie; they say it's took by our men, and they're coming this way. I guess they'll git stopped before they git here."

"They may get stopped, but I hope they'll not get beaten. I see plainly, Jerusha, that you won't let me kindle the fires of your patriotism, or if I do, you put them out with soapsuds, so I will go off by myself and do my own celebrating."

"Look out that you don't go too far," Jerusha warned her.

"I'll not," Marianne called back. She went up to the garret to rummage in an old chest, where she remembered storing a good-sized American flag two years before. It was one she had made and brought over for the purpose of teasing Royal and Jack. She rolled it up and slipped it in her pocket with her little pipe. Then she went down through the orchard and on into the woods. A slim young sapling gave her a staff for her flag, and with it flung out to the breeze, she marched along gayly piping Yankee Doodle.

When she reached a certain little knoll she planted her flag firmly, and standing by its side she addressed herself to the silent company of the trees. Her clear, girlish voice rang out in a flowery speech, in which much spread-eagle oratory, mixed metaphor, and queer

logic were prominent. She was totally unaware that she had other audience than the sentinel trees, but behind her, watering his horse at a tinkling brook, was a young British soldier hastening with a message to Queenston. In front of her in the thicket was hidden an American scout on his way in the opposite direction to join Scott's army. Of the two, it was the scout who was least anxious to be seen; for his was a dangerous errand through the enemy's country, and he took his life in his hand when he ventured forth.

The address ended, Marianne piped up again her Yankee Doodle. The two men listened with very opposite emotions. What did not the little pipe bring to the redcoat's recollection? What patriotic feelings were not stirred in the heart of the American? He plucked up courage at the sound. Here was a patriotic maiden, who could probably give him a few hints how best to avoid the enemy on his journey.

Marianne stood smiling as he advanced toward her. He halted at the foot of the mound, but alas for the Britisher, this very moment gave a glimpse of the red-coat to the scout. Each saw the other at the same instant. It was a critical time for the American; there might be other British near; he obeyed his first impulse and fired. At the same instant Marianne, having seen his start of surprise, swung around and caught sight of the figure by the brook. She rushed forward

still holding her flag, which she had a minute before taken in her hand. Did she not recognize that boyish face? "Jack!" she cried. "Oh, Jack!"

The young man still stood, but he leaned heavily against his horse and felt for his pistol. Seeing this, the American took aim a second time, but before he could fire, the form of the girl sprang between him and his enemy, and her flag covered Jack from sight. "You dare not fire on your flag," cried Marianne. "Go, go quickly; I, too, am an American, but you shall not fire upon this man. Go, or I will call help; your enemies are nearer than you know." She put the pipe to her lips, and the man plunged into the thicket without a look behind.

Then Marianne flung down her flag, and ran to where Jack had sunk to the ground, very white, but with a smile on his lips. The girl crouched beside him, and took his head in her lap. "Jack," she said, "Jack, you are not hurt badly; tell me you are not." His lips moved, but he grew very faint, and no words came. His pallor and silence overcame Marianne with alarm. "He is dead," she moaned. "All I love must go. Oh, Jack, dear, dear Jack, I have been so cruel to you, so wrong and hard-hearted. Speak to me. I love you, yes, I do love you. Listen while I tell it. Listen before you die. I know now. I knew when you left me that day. Jack, my dearest, my only love, don't

die." The eyelids fluttered, but there was no response from his white lips. "What shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, if some one would only come! Jerusha! Victor! Kate!" she called. There came an answer from over the hill, and presently a figure in sunbonnet and flapping gown appeared between the trees. "Jerusha! Jerusha!" cried Marianne, "hurry! hurry!" And Jerusha's strides became a run.

"I cal'lated you'd been gone long enough," Jerusha began, but she broke short her sentence. "What in the name of conscience are you doin' there? For the land's sake, Mary Ann Reyburn, what are you doing with that Britisher?"

"Oh, Jerusha, Jerusha, it's Jack, it's Jack, and he's killed! Oh, Jerusha, it is my own dear Jack who loves me so; and I love him, I do, Jack, I do!"

Despite the gravity of the situation, Jerusha gave her a glance of scorn. "You do, do you? I thought you couldn't abide him. Trust a girl for not knowing her own mind. Here, let me see what's the matter." She knelt down and laid her hand over the young man's heart. "He ain't dead; he's just swoonded." She went to the brook, and scooping up some water, dashed it in his face, and then began to bathe his head. After a little he opened his eyes and smiled at them. Marianne sat up stiffly. "You're not dead," she said.

"No," he replied; "I guess not this time. It was

a close shave. You saved me, Marianne," he whispered.

The color came back to the girl's lips. "I believe I did," she replied, in a low voice, glancing at Jerusha, who was tethering the horse that he might not get away. "Or, rather," she went on, seeing that Jerusha did not hear, "it was the flag did it. You were saved by my flag; you can never revile it again."

Jack began to laugh weakly in spite of his evident pain. "It was so funny," he said.

"What?" asked Marianne, in surprise.

"The Fourth of July address," he answered, and then he fainted again, and Marianne's rising pique was lost in her anxiety.

"We must try to get him up to the house at once," said Jerusha, coming at Marianne's call. "I'll go and fetch Victor and some sort of litter, and I guess between us we can carry him. Don't you get into high-strikes again while I'm gone. He's good for some time yet, for all I kin see."

With this reassurance and admonishment, Marianne was left. She sat quietly, with Jack's head resting in her lap, and in a short time Jerusha returned, and Jack was carefully carried to the house, where he was wept over by Kate, and tenderly ministered to by Victorine and Madame Desvouges. He was Royal's friend, and that was enough to win him compassionate and gentle

care. Upon seeing him in competent hands, Marianne held aloof, and as his danger lessened, she withdrew herself more and more.

As night came on, the sound of distant cannonading reached their ears, and the next day brought the news of victory for the Americans on the field of Chippewa. "I told you," said Jerusha, "there would be fireworks."

A few days later, when the American army was encamped at Queenston, who should come hobbling in but Asa. He had been wounded at Lundy's Lane, but had declined to be sent to the hospital at Lewiston, saying he had friends on this side the river. He brought news that gave a strange gray pallor to Jerusha's face. Her husband had fallen in battle. She heard Asa imperturbably, giving no evidence of emotion but a tight clasping of her knotted hands. "I hope he was prepared," she said, as she arose to leave the room. Marianne stole after her. "Jerusha, dear Jerusha," she said, with her arms about her, "I am so, so grieved for you."

Jerusha pressed her lips convulsively together. "I guess my bitterest tears were shed long ago," she said. "He wa'n't a good man, but he might have been a worse one. He was no patriot, but—but—" She turned away her head, and the tears stole down her cheeks. He was the love of her youth, and at that moment all else was blotted out.

Next to appear was Fred Lyle, Lieutenant Lyle now, and he brought brighter news. Mrs. Reyburn and Sue were in Geneva, and had been together all this time. They were both well. Captain Reyburn still awaited his exchange, but they had heard from him from time to time, and he was well treated and hoped for a speedy release; indeed, they might expect to see him any day. Of Major Silverthorn Jack was able to tell them; he was still with the army, and as bitter a partisan as ever. Jack, it may be mentioned, seemed very well content not to have been a sharer in the fortunes and misfortunes of his regiment at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane. Fred gave them a graphic account of these two battles, of that valiant charge at Chippewa, where General Scott, by his brilliant tactics, defeated the larger force of the enemy; and of Lundy's Lane, fought within sight and sound of the thundering cataract of Niagara, and fought by night, a weird battle surely. "We took the battery, held it, and drove the enemy from the field. We should have held our ground; there was no reason why we could not have done it, but because we did not, the British claim a victory, but it is preposterous."

Jack, to whom he was talking, did not argue the point. He felt in no mood for it. He was occupied with wondering why Marianne held herself so aloof. She had saved his life, for without a doubt a second

shot from the unerring gun of an American scout would have laid him low. He felt secure as to his despatches, for Victor had taken charge of them and forwarded them. But for Marianne's presence they might have fallen into the hands of the enemy, Jack told himself, and he owed the girl thanks for that.

It was his old spirit of teasing which finally brought Marianne out of her attitude of diffidence; for he told her triumphantly that he meant to apply to the British government for a medal for her in recognition of her gallantry in defending his Majesty's messenger, who was carrying important despatches upon his person.

She recoiled a step from him and looked at him with a shocked expression. He was sitting up for the first time, and though not rosy, he looked well. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I did that! I was disloyal to my country! O dear, that was dreadful! I ought not to have failed to examine your pockets to find out what you carried; that is what a real heroine would have done. It really was dreadfully wrong of me."

"To save my life?" He held out his hand. "You said we were friends, Marianne," he dropped his bantering tone. "Won't you let me thank you for that? It was like your dear, noble self."

Marianne smiled. "As I told you before, you must thank my flag; it defended you. You were under its protection. No good American would fire on his own

flag, you see, and I knew it would be perfectly safe for you behind it."

"All the same, the flag couldn't have walked without feet, and it was you who placed yourself between me and danger. I repeat, and shall always to my dying day, that you saved my life; I wish you would take the credit for it and let me tell them all what you did."

"I don't want you to."

"Why not?"

Marianne shot him a hurt glance. "You must not tell any one that it was I who saved you. Oh, can't you see why?" And she precipitately fled, leaving Jack to puzzle over her words. It was months after that his masculine mind grasped what she meant, and he was able to perceive what her womanly intuition had seen in a moment.

Jack joined his grandfather in Montreal, and Asa with his limping foot remained with the family till the summer faded and the winter brought the news that the Niagara frontier was abandoned by both sides. It had been sorely distressed, but one after another began to creep back to the abandoned homes; the wasted fields once more began to show signs of greenness, and houses sprang up here and there upon the sites marked by blackened heaps. Among the last to return were Captain Reyburn and his wife. The former had at last

received his exchange and made haste to join his wife at Geneva. Together they made the journey back to where their home once stood, and then they crossed the river. The news of Royal's death and of Marianne's safety had reached them, and now they were eager to see their daughter and the new claimant to their affections, the baby Walter.

It was a nipping cold day when they arrived at Madame Desvouges's and found, shut in the warmth of her big living-room, the whole family. For once Mrs. Reyburn had no words as she held Marianne to her mother heart. "Our child, our child; all we have left," she said at last, turning to her husband. But Captain Reyburn was smiling down at Kate, as he held the baby close to his bearded face. "Oh, no," he said, "we have another daughter, and here, my wife, is our little grandson that you have so longed to see." He put the child in her lap and asked, "And what is the name of this little fellow?"

"Walter, Kate told me. It was Royal's dearest wish that he should be named after you." And then the strong man, who had bravely faced danger and loss and sorrow and defeat, fell upon his knees by his wife's side and hid his face. "My son, my son," he cried, "how gladly would I have died for you!"

Tears were coursing down Marianne's cheeks as she bent over him. "Father, dear father," she whispered,

"don't say that. What would mother and I do without you?"

"Your last letter was such a comfort," Kate told him, "and he said many times that he loved you very dearly even when he seemed the most unruly, and he hoped his son would be the comfort and stay to you that he thought he had failed to be."

"My poor Royal," sighed Mrs. Reyburn, "he was so young, and it was love he needed to lead him. He would never be driven."

Despite the knowledge that all hard feeling had been swept away by the letter Captain Reyburn had written to his son, and which was so treasured by him, it was a bitter moment for the father, who realized too late that but for his own inflexible will there need never have been any misunderstanding between him and his eldest born.

That Kate bore him no ill-will and was so anxious to carry out Royal's wishes affected Captain Reyburn greatly, and he paid her such deference and consideration as would have gladdened Royal's heart to see. "You will come home to us, my daughter," he said to her. "I shall rebuild as soon as spring opens. By then I hope we shall have peace."

"We will see whether Kate and the boy are willing to leave me," interposed Madame Desvouges, jealously. She was pitifully eager to recompense Kate for her first unkindness, and as to the boy, to lose him seemed more

than she could bear. "You would not take them from me," she said pathetically. "I should never recover from it! I want them always, always."

"But we want them, too," said Mrs. Reyburn, already a slave to her grandson's charms.

"We shall see," said Madame, emphatically. "There is time enough. Matters will adjust themselves. There is no need to quarrel over them now. Possession is nine points of the law, and behold, we possess."

CHAPTER XX

Peace

BY the time the new home across the river was built there was peace in the land. The battle of New Orleans had been fought, the last engagement upon the high seas had taken place, the last prize had been brought in. The roar of battle would never again reach those whose ears were once more attuned to the rush of the mighty cataract of Niagara.

"Your Uncle Tom wanted me to sell out up here and settle down near him," Captain Reyburn told his daughter, "but I have never seen a spot that suits me so well in all my travels."

"There was never so lovely a country," returned Marianne, enthusiastically. "Where is there anything so grand as our Falls, and where will you see such color as in our river and lake? Who can show us finer scenery? No, no, I am glad to live and die here."

They had taken a ride up to the Falls and were looking at the marvellous greens and blues in the water below them. "I feel very much as if I had been in the Whirlpool rapids myself," said Marianne. "Ah, father

dear, what a terrible, terrible time it has been. I think while I live I never can blot out that day when our home was burned."

Her father looked grave. "I haven't paid my debt to that young man yet, and I don't suppose I shall ever be able to do it. I wish you would find out if there's anything in the world I can do for him. He was your brother's friend, and so he has more than one claim on me. I suppose you don't know what he intends to do with himself now that the war is over."

A lovely color flushed Marianne's face. "He says his grandfather has decided to remain in Montreal, and he wanted Jack to remain with him there, but Jack didn't care to do it. He loves our Niagara country as much as we do."

"I don't blame him, then, for wanting to stay. Will he go back to the old place?"

"No, it is to be sold, or has been already, so Kate tells me. Major Silverthorn owned half of it, and the rest goes to his son's children, Kate and Sue and Jack."

Mr. Reyburn smiled. "I can't get over your letting Fred Lyle slip you," he said jokingly.

"Ah, but you see he would have taken me to Kentucky; and how would you have liked that?"

"I didn't think of that part of it. Well, he is happy; he got the girl he wanted, I reckon."

"Yes, I am sure of that."

They mounted their horses and rode slowly back. This was their first day in the new home, but before they had quite reached it they met Jack.

"I came over to see the new house," he announced. "I got back last night. Kate said you would be in condition to receive callers to-day. It is quite an affair. Shall you build a barn, Captain?"

"Yes, I shall have to, for I am going to work for a good crop, and I hope I shall need it. Then we'll have to have another husking-bee, Marianne."

"But alas, I fear we should have a slim attendance."

"That is a fact; the thing we are most in need of is neighbors."

"I was thinking of becoming a neighbor myself," said Jack. "I must settle somewhere."

"You couldn't find a better place," said Captain Reyburn, heartily. "We'll try to be neighborly. But then you'll have to become an American citizen, if you're this side the river."

"I don't think that need matter now, sir. I did my duty when I was called upon, and I don't think it makes any difference since the war is over. Most of my friends have left the other side of the river, and there are rather sad memories connected with the old place. I shouldn't care to live there again,

and I shouldn't care to live anywhere else, if I must settle over there."

"Then come and make yourself a home next to us. I will sell you a good piece of land at your own price. What do you say?"

"That's a very kind offer, Captain, and I appreciate it, I assure you, but I'd like to think about it." He glanced quickly at Marianne as he spoke. She had dismounted, and Jack was leading her horse while she walked by his side.

"I owe you a debt I can never repay," Captain Reyburn continued. "You saved my girl's life, and if there's anything in the world I can do for you, Jack, you have but to tell me. But I must be getting along. If you two like to take a slower way of getting home, just take your time. Don't forget that's a standing offer about the land."

"But, Captain, the debt—" Jack began. But Captain Reyburn was already too far ahead to hear.

"What were you going to say?" Marianne asked him.

They were standing still, the horse cropping the young grass at their feet.

"I didn't want him to think that he was under such a weight of obligation after what you did for me. I wanted him to know that the debt is cancelled."

"Oh, you goose!" returned Marianne. And then

Jack suddenly understood why she did not want it known that she had lessened that debt.

He dropped the horse's bridle, and let the creature nibble at will. "Marianne, Marianne," he said, seizing her hands, "is that why you did not want it known? Did you think of it so long ago? What a stupid dolt I am."

"Did I think of what? Did you hear father say that if you wanted anything you were to tell him? What shall you ask for? I think he would use his influence with Mr. Ashman if you are thinking of asking for Minerva's hand. I hear the family have returned."

"Marianne, darling, will you let me ask for what I most want? Will he give it to me, do you think?" Jack went on, paying no heed to her teasing.

"If he wants to save my life, he will," Marianne answered, half laughing, half crying.

"Are you joking? Do you mean it? Will you be glad to have me for a neighbor? Ah, Marianne, Marianne, one day, long ago, I looked up at your dear face watching me from the little cabin window, and I thought then how gladly, how joyfully, I would make a home for you, and work all my days for you if you would but love me a little, and now, how dear such a home would be with you in it. May I build it for you, Marianne?"

"Perhaps. Some day. Not yet, oh, no, not yet."

"Why not yet?"

"You will have to prove yourself a good American by a certain length of residence; you will have to do — oh, many things. I believe it was nothing in the world but my flag that induced you to consider settling this side the river. You owe your life to it, as I told you, and you cannot do less than acknowledge its power."

"You are a tease, Marianne."

"And so are you."

"I confess it. I have something else to confess. That day, when the flag protected me, you know, I — wasn't altogether unconscious all the time."

The color flamed up into Marianne's face. "Jack Silverthorn, all this time! You mean — mean — cheating — "

Jack put his arms around her. "Forgive me, dear girl."

"Go away. I don't want to speak to you."

"I didn't hear everything, I am quite positive," Jack went on apologetically, "only a very little; but that — oh, Marianne, are you so ashamed of it? It has made me so happy, and has made me content to wait till I could have a little hope that your father would consent to let me marry you some day. If it was true what you said, you cannot mind that it

made me happy; and you said, a little while ago, that if your father wanted to save your life, and all that — ”

“I didn’t mean it; I was only joking. I told you long ago we could only be friends.”

Jack looked very miserable. “Then I was dreaming. Very well, Marianne, I am sorry I didn’t understand that it was only a dream, or that in your excitement you said what, in your calmer moments, you would deny. You didn’t really care, and that is all; or else, though you might have cared for me a little then, you do not now. I cannot help loving you, but I will go back to Montreal, I think.”

Marianne turned swiftly. “No, no, you shall not. I am a horrid wretch, and you are much too good for me — for a silly thing like me. I meant it all, every word. There, is that enough, sir? Is it?”

“It is enough, dearest, best beloved. It is everything. . Why were you so cruel? How could you have the heart?”

“Because I am so very silly. You will think so when I tell you. I didn’t mean you should know. I wanted you to tell me all over again. It has been a long time since you did, till to-day. I wanted to wait till I thought my father would say just what he has said, and then I would tell you to go and ask him; and some day I meant to tell you myself

about that dreadful day when I said those things, and thought you didn't hear."

"I will tell you all over again, and I will ask your father very properly. I love you as my life, Marianne. I love you with all my heart. Some day will you say those words you said that day?"

"I forget what I said."

He drew her nearer to him, and whispered, "You said, 'Jack, my dearest, my only love, don't die.'"

"Did I say all that?" she whispered back. "You must have heard every word."

"Won't you say it over so you won't forget? Won't you, Marianne?"

She stood without speaking, suddenly shy. Then it came over her that he had been so willing to give his love in full measure, he had never withheld one tithe of it from her, and then he was no more her enemy than she was his, and she whispered, half laughing, "Jack, my dearest, my only love, don't die."

"I won't if I can help it," he returned, laughing, too, "I promise you I'll try not. Do you know the apple trees are all in blossom again? Have you forgotten a day —"

"How you do remind one of humiliating things."

"To me they are the joys of my life, the happiest memories I could possess. There, we are in sight of

your house. See the apple trees, they are covered with blooms. For the sake of that parting, Marianne — ”

“Oh, are you going? I didn’t know it was good-by. I thought — ”

“I am not going; I have to tell your father what I want before I can think of going.”

“Then, of course, since it isn’t good-by — you know — I couldn’t — ”

“Let it be a parting from our old trials and tribulations, from all uncertainty and despair. Marianne — ”

She did not resist as his head bent lower, but, as before, it was the fleetest kiss she gave him, and then she ran from him to the house to seek — strange to say, not her mother, but Jerusha. “Oh, Jerusha, Jerusha,” she whispered, hiding her hot face on Jerusha’s shoulder, “Jack, you know — Jack — ”

Jerusha patted her awkwardly, but a sly smile broke over her face. “Why yes, Mary Ann, I know Jack. What about him?”

“He’s going to build a house, and — ”

“I don’t see anything remarkable in that, that it should set you all of a quiver.”

“No, not that — but — there is something more remarkable.”

“Well, out with it.” Jerusha was merciless.

Down went the head again. “He’s going to build

it for me," she whispered, and Jerusha laughed. But she gave a sigh a minute after and bestowed a trembling kiss upon Marianne's cheek. "God bless you, child," she said; "there ain't nawthing like honest love. I guess you've airnt it. It's come to you at the right time, and I'm glad for you. They say they ain't no marrying and giving in marriage in heaven, but the' ain't a word said about the' being no loving." Marianne lifted her head, and softly kissed the sunburnt face. Jerusha went to the door, and looked out at the bloom-sweet orchard. "Asa Peaslee's taken a shine to that little old cabin in the woods," she said, in an altered tone. "He's bought it off the folks that owned it; they ain't coming back."

"I am glad Asa is going to have it. I have an affection for that little old cabin. Poor Asa, his lame leg will prevent him from going back to his peddling, I am afraid. Is he going to live there alone?"

Jerusha did not answer for a moment, then she said, in a hard way, "He wanted I should come and keep house for him."

"Oh, Jerusha, Jerusha! And are you going? Do you mean to leave us?"

"No, marm, I ain't. I'm nobody's fool. I had a real hankering arter them leach pits and my old

soap kettle, but when I considered what went with 'em I give 'em up right willingly."

"Asa is very handy; I think he will get along without a wife."

"Can't say. Men's terrible onsartin critturs. You can't expect much of 'em, even the best among 'em. The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

"O, dear me, Jerusha, how discouraging. I shall not stay to listen to such remarks."

"You'd better go," returned Jerusha, half maliciously; "here's your father looking fur you; he's called you twicet."

Marianne started back, then she gave an embarrassed laugh and said to herself, "There's no use putting it off; I might as well be over with it." She ran out at once to meet her father, and they sat down together upon a pile of logs left from the building.

"Look here, young woman," said Captain Reyburn. "how old are you?"

"I am almost twenty years old, sir."

He looked at her in surprise. "Goodness, child, I can't believe it. I thought you were about seventeen."

"I was about that when the war broke out."

"That's it; the war made me forget. Why, you're two years older than your mother was when I married her."

"Yes, sir."

"What about this young fellow, Jack? He's asked me for a pretty big thing in payment of my debt of obligation."

"Not very big, sir, only five feet one and a half."

"You minx, I see you are in the game. You want to leave your old dad, do you? Just as he has you back again?"

"Oh, no, I don't, not for a long, long while. And besides, you didn't mind my going to Kentucky with Cousin Fred."

"You've got me there, haven't you. How about your grandmother's plan for you and Victor? No entanglement there?"

"No, sir, that was over long ago. I think grand-mère has other plans for Victor, and besides, I should be nearer you on this side the river."

"That's so. I've as good as sold Jack a hundred acres, at least—but we'll talk about that later. I thought you were too good an American to marry a man who'd fight against your country."

"I'd rather marry a man that was brave and honest and true to his own country when he thought she needed him, than one like Victor, who wouldn't fight at all. Besides, Jack is going to be an American. I would never, never live anywhere but under the Stars and Stripes."

"That's right all around. He won't have to go far back to establish his claim to being an American; his father was born in the States."

"Yes, and besides, his sister Sue has married a Kentuckian."

"Yes, I see. Well then, little girl, I reckon that hundred acres has got to go for a wedding present, and we'll get Kate and the boy over here to take your place, for I don't see but that we've got to let you go; it won't do to keep the young man waiting too long for a home. I like the boy; and because a man fought on the other side is no reason he can't be honest and straightforward and manly. I learned that up in Quebec, where I have some good friends this minute, for all they wore the king's uniform while I was a prisoner at their mercy. We'll agree to bury the hatchet, and I guess there will be no quarrelling over politics. I think Jack will be good to my little girl, and it is worth everything to have her close by. Come now, kiss your old dad, and run along and tell mother."

Marianne was not slow to give him all the kisses he wanted, and he watched her graceful figure as it disappeared into the house; then he turned away with a sigh. "We'll have to get Kate and the baby over here," he said.

But, as Marianne said, grand'mère had her own

plans. To let that baby go was something not to be thought of. She realized it, yes, of course it was the right of the Reyburns to care for Kate and her child, but she confided to Victor they would all be desolated without that baby. She perceived that to a young man of Victor's sensibility the spectacle of a young mother and her child was one of unusual beauty; and then Kate was a superior woman, so sweet of soul, so good to have around one. She did not wish to depreciate Marianne, whom she loved, she idolized, but it would be cruel to deprive her parents of their only child, and Victor had not seemed of late so charmed to consider the old plan. It was not that Marianne had less charm, but that the young mother and child had more,—so pathetic, so appealing to a young man of good heart. "Yes, Victor, you see," she went on to say, "that it would be of all things the most delightful. Royal's son is provided for at the same time that you are. Victorine, our saint, has still her dot, though she will not have her husband; she does not wish one, our poor Victorine. She adores the child. Then how cruel to deprive her of this joy. You see, Victor, my wish?"

"I see, maman; but you do not consider Kate. For me, I am more than content. It is, as you say, a beautiful sight,—the mother and her young child. It fills me with holy thoughts, but I do not know if she

would consent? Her heart is there buried in the grave of her husband."

"Patience, my son, patience. You have that rare virtue, which is not that of every man. Already I see her depend upon you, look up to you, confide in you. In good time, perhaps not the love she gave to Royal, but affection, yes, affection. She is too sweet a nature not to make happy the man she marries. Yes, yes, I see it will all come about in time. She will not reject you after a while."

It was when Marianne came to tell Kate that she had decided upon her wedding-day that she first perceived that it might be possible for grand'mère's plan to come about. In her own heart Marianne had hoped that it would. It seemed so good an arrangement, even Mr. Reyburn agreed when his wife told him, and he entered into the conspiracy by not demanding that Madame should give up Kate and the baby. Kate herself was the only one who was oblivious of it all. She was relieved that they did not insist upon her changing her home. She was very content, even happy, where she was. They loved her dearly; they were so good to her; they were less strangers than the Reyburns. It was now over two years since she had become a widow, and in two years a home can become much more a home.

She greeted Marianne's news joyfully. "I am so

glad," she said. "Dear old Jack, he is the happiest mortal alive. It does one good to see his sunny face. And when is it to be?"

"On the Fourth of July," returned Marianne, triumphantly.

Kate laughed. "Oh, you most patriotic of maidens, you give poor Jack no chance."

"No," Marianne laughed, "I don't intend to. I mean that he shall always celebrate the day. There are more reasons than one why he is perfectly contented to be married on the Fourth. Jack is very sentimental, if you did but know it, and he has reason to remember more than one Fourth of July, he says. There is an American flag which belongs to me. We shall be married under that; he loves it and I love it, and we shall keep it treasured always. I will tell you why, some day, when I am an old married woman."

"You do love Jack very dearly, don't you?" said Kate, wistfully.

"I do love him very, very dearly," Marianne answered steadily. "He is much too good for me, but I hope I shall grow better and wiser as I grow older; there is room for it," she said lightly, to cover her real earnestness. "You will all come in your best bibs and tuckers. You must have a pretty new white gown, Kate. I want it to be a happy day for everybody."

Kate sat thoughtful over her sewing. "Will it be a happy day for Victor?" she asked hesitatingly.

"For Victor? Oh, Kate, you don't think—why, that was over long ago. We were never lovers at the best; it was only make believe, because grand'mère wanted it. Did you think—why, Kate, don't you know—" She looked at her with an amused, half surprised expression, and then ran out, saying, "I must tell my news to the others."

She found that Jack was before her so far as Victor was concerned, but she drew the latter aside and said, "You might be as happy as we are if you were not as blind as a mole, you slow old Victor."

"What do you mean?" asked Victor, showing more eagerness than was his wont.

"There's such a thing as being too patient," Marianne returned, nodding her head wisely. "There is Kate coming this way; go and meet her, and—"

But this time Victor was not dull of comprehension. He walked off with a great leap at his heart, for she who was coming was the one woman in the world to him at that moment.

Marianne turned to Jack. "There is a little tinkling brook over there in the woods. I used to sail chips there when I was a little child." Jack looked at her with appreciative eyes. It was not the memory of her childhood which made hers so sweetly moist; the

little brook had other associations, he well knew. He took her hand in his, and together they walked slowly down the path to the woods.

Victorine sat at the door; in her lap lay the sleeping boy, one chubby hand clasping her fingers. She sang softly to him a quaint old French lullaby. She saw Victor lead Kate down the orchard lane, to where stood little Madame Desvouges in bright-eyed expectation. She saw Marianne and Jack saunter off together, so engrossed in each other that the world seemed to hold but the two. As in a vision the coming years passed before her. For Victor and Kate, for Marianne and Jack, would be hope and home and wedded love. She looked down at the child upon her knees. To her God had given Royal's boy.

